

The Apostle St Thomas

In India

History, Tradition and Legend

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Printed at the Codrington Press

19

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In accordance with the decrees of Pope Urban VIII, we declare that we attribute a merely human and legendary authority to the accounts of graces, miracles and supernatural occurrences contained in this work, in so far as such accounts have not been examined, recognized and approved by the Holy See. We further declare, that in speaking of Saints and Martyrs, we use these words in a general way, with no intention of forestalling the judgment of the Church, to whom alone it belongs to confer these titles in their real full and true meaning.



Part I

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS



I

INTRODUCTION

Since the last decades of the past century, there is a tendency, even among some Catholic writers, to demolish the old traditions of the Church. They do that in the name of an exaggerated historical critic, and under pretext of keeping on the level of so called modern scientific methods and in order, they say, not to be looked down upon by the enemies of the Church as inferiors in matter of science. Thus they help these enemies in their work of demolishing the venerable traditions, which have such an important part in the religious life of the people.

Only those who have spent their life in the sacred ministry, and especially in missionary countries, can fully understand the extent to which these traditions, and even pious legends which have no historical support, enter into the lives and maintain strong and lively the Faith of these simple people and how deeply they engrave in their minds the truth of our holy Religion.

The Indians (I speak of the uneducated masses) learn their catechism in Church and at school, and as a rule know it well. But they understand it much better when the lesson is illustrated with local legends and stories well adapted to their understanding, because they present to their imagination objects with which they are familiar, and not events and circumstances that are stranger to them

I have often remarked, how little young Indians, even of the higher, educated classes, understand St Aloysius Gonzaga, when he is presented to them as a model to follow, an example to imitate. They cannot place this holy youth under the palm groves of their native country. His life was passed under conditions, so entirely outside the range of their experience, so different from their ways of life.

But speak to them about the young Brahmin martyrs Alphonsus de Costa or Francis Rodriguez, who lived the same life and under the very same conditions as themselves, their heart get inflamed and they burn with the desire of following the footsteps of their young countrymen

There is no doubt that all absurd legends must be put aside, and nothing admitted which genuine history declares to be false. But, in these latter times too much has been done and written in order to demolish not only the legends,

but even the most venerable traditions of the Catholic Church

Whence comes this unwholesome tendency ? It took its rise in the pride and ambition of men. Every man desires to do something, to hand down his name to posterity. In olden times, they undertook long voyages to discover unknown lands, or founded new cities. Now a days, that there remain neither new lands to be discovered nor cities to be founded, they want to pull down old cities, and to lay waste to ancient lands.

The very ancient tradition which affirms that St. Thomas the Apostle preached the Gospel in India and which consequently gives to the Church of that country an apostolic origin has not been more respected than the others.

Until recently however the attacks had been directed against the authenticity of the local traditions, concerning the places where the Apostle had founded Churches and established the first Christian communities.

It was not denied that the Apostle had been in India or that he had won there the crown of martyrdom. The so called critics contended themselves with raising doubts about the place where the martyrdom is said to have taken place, the sanctuary of Mailepur. They pretended, that

it was not the Apostle, but another Thomas who evangelised the Malabar Coast. The substance of the tradition however was left intact.

Lately however, a Catholic writer of some repute published a book, in which he implicitly denies, that St. Thomas the Apostle ever came to India.

He affirms, without giving a single convincing proof, that St. Thomas reached Peshawar, but that he never went any further, demolishing thus at one blow the tradition, for, if St. Thomas, came only as far as Peshawar it is clear that he had never been in India, because, this town historically and ethnographically belongs to Afghanistan, though, conquered by the British, it has been incorporated into the Indian empire in the same way as Aden, Baluchistan and Buimah.

Now why did the author light on Peshawar, where no tradition is to be found either of the Apostle or of an early Christian community. He does it simply for the reason that in the neighbourhood of this town coins have been discovered bearing the effigy and inscription of King Gondophares. But such coins have been found in Afghanistan and in eastern Persia, in fact all along the ancient commercial road between Syria and India. And on this argument he shatters the foundation of the whole tradition.

The whole force of his reasoning rests on the gratuitous assertion, that Peshawar was the capital of King Gondophares that he resided in that town and that St Thomas lived there with him

But the very same legend which connects St Thomas with King Gondophares says clearly that the headquarters of the Apostle in the north west of India was Helioforum,¹ a town which Gondophares but seldom visited and with which he does not seem to have had even frequent communication

It is certainly possible that in the course of his extensive travels St Thomas visited Peshawar, but there is no tradition nor any other evidence to justify this supposition. But even if he was there, there is certainly no reason for denying that he had visited other parts of India, or for affirming that he confined his preaching to that town only and to its neighbourhood

The Apostles did not limit their preaching to one town or to one province. On the contrary, obedient to the command of their divine Master. They went into the whole world and preached the Gospel to every creature.²⁾

The reader will not find in these pages a learned

¹) See Part I Chap VIII

²) Mark. XVI 13.

historical dissertation. Their only aim is to make clear to the Clergy and Faithful of India, how strong, and how well supported by documentary evidence is the tradition which ascribes the origin of their Church to the Apostle St. Thomas

We will abstain from endeavouring to prove an irrefutable thesis. Who wants proofs will find them in abundance in Bishop Medlycott's learned and extensive work.¹⁾

India is in possession of the tradition that the Gospel was preached to her by the Apostle St. Thomas, and arguments much stronger than any based on a few ancient coins, are required to make her abandon this tradition.

And we will say with Father Marcellin da Civezza, the illustrious historian of the Franciscan Order

„In the face of such a mass of evidence, supported by the constant tradition of the Church, it would be an act of temerity and of incredible audacity, to raise even a shadow of doubt, on the fact of the Apostolate and martyrdom of St. Thomas in India.“²⁾

1) India and the Apostle Thomas London Nutt 1905

2) Storia delle Missioni Francescane Vol VIII p 47

II

ST THOMAS IN THE GOSPEL

There are two passages in the Gospel which show the character of St Thomas, and it will be helpful in the criticism of the legend to see, whether the facts which it relates are in keeping with his character

„The Jews then took stones to stone him. They sought therefore to take him, and he escaped out of their hands, and he went again beyond the Jordan, into that place where John was baptizing first, and there he abode“¹⁾

And when a messenger came there to call him to Lazarus who was dying, and Jesus said to his disciples „Lazarus is dead. But let us go to him. Thomas therefore who is called Didymus, said to his fellow-disciples. Let us also go, that we may die with him“ — ²⁾

— „Now, when it was late, the same day, the first

1) John. X. 31, 39, 40.

2) John. XI. 14 to 16.

of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them. Peace be with you.

And when he had said this he shewed them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord.

He said therefore to them again. Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me I also send you.

When he had said this, he breathed on them, and he said to them Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.

Now Thomas one of the twelve, who is also called Didymus was not with them when Jesus came.

The other disciples therefore said to him. We have seen the Lord. But he said to them Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

And after eight days, again his disciples were within and Thomas with them Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said Peace be to you

Then he said to Thomas Put in thy finger, hither,

and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand and put it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing

Thomas answered and said to him My Lord and my God.

Jesus saith to him Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed blessed are they that have not seen and have believed " —)

What part does Thomas play in the plan of our Redemption?

By what is commonly called his incredulity, he confessed the faith of the Apostles in the divinity of Christ and confirmed us in that same Faith Besides, he brings new evidence, and that of a most convincing character of the truth of the Resurrection

Pope Gregory the Great says

— „If the disciples were slow to believe in the Resurrection of our blessed Lord, it was not on account of the weakness of their faith, but in order to confirm our Faith Because they doubted, the Resurrection was proved by many arguments, and, when we read them, we strengthen our Faith on those points about which they

) Job. XX. 9 to 25.

Mary Magdalen who believed at once did less doubted. Faith solid than Thomas who doubted for a to make our For Thomas, after having doubted, touched certain time. of Christ and in so doing cured in our hearts the wounds of doubt.“ 1)

St. Hilary of Poitiers. „Thomas confesses And St. God, without hurting by that confession his that Christ in Unity of God. He confesses in Christ the faith in the e, and Jesus does not deny it. He confesses divine nature, he says Dominus meus et Deus meus. this when Christ is his God and consequently God.“ - 2)

Therefore, C

St. Jerome of Tours writes - „St. Thomas when St. Mary the wounds of Christ, and whilst touching his examining touched in Christ a true body. The blessed flesh, confessed and touched, and what he did then, now Apostle saw all, because in exercising his solicitude on the benefits us first, he confirmed our Faith.“ 3)

body of Christ

And in another place „Last Sunday we said that, the members of the body of Christ after the in touching, St. Thomas confirmed the Faith of all Resurrection

in Evangelia

- 1) Homilia 2 de Trinitate
- 2) Tractatus de sollemnitate. Sermo III
- 3) In Pascha

Christians, and in order to banish all doubt in regard to the Divinity of Christ, he wished to examine the scars of his wounds. Thus the holy Apostle did not only for his own satisfaction, his curiosity is of advantage to all the faithful. His close examination of the whole body of Christ, takes away all solicitude from the hearts of the believers. Since Thomas has not only seen, but touched, who can any longer doubt the Resurrection of our Saviour.

St Thomas being holy faithful and just, examined every thing carefully, not because he himself still doubted the truth of the Resurrection, but in order to preserve others from doubt. For himself, and for the confirmation of his own faith, it was certainly sufficient, that he should have seen that body, which he knew so well. It was for us that he touched it, so that none might remain incredulous, and object that his eyes deceived him, and that he only thought he saw Jesus Christ. The hand which touches is not deceived. In the Resurrection sight alone might be subject to illusion, but there is no doubting the sense of touch " — "

And in the Meneia of the Greeks

„In touching the Saviour's side, oh ! holy Apostle Thomas, thou hast possessed thyself of the plenitude of all that is good. Like a sponge thou hast filled thyself at the fountain of truth with the waters of eternal life , banishing all ignorance, thou hast caused to spring forth the divine fountain of the dogmas of the knowledge of God. By thy incredulity and by thy faith, thou hast confirmed those who were tempted with doubt , and thou didst preach to every creature God, our Saviour, clothed in our flesh, for us, on earth, and dead upon the cross, with His lance-opened side, the source from which our life is drawn.“ 1)

1) Dom Guéranger L'année liturgique

III

THE ROADS TO INDIA

In setting out to establish the truth of the tradition that St Thomas preached in India, the first question that arises is, whether the journey to India, in those days, was possible or not

This is readily answered, for history makes it clear that that journey was not only possible but comparatively easy

From the time of the Emperor Augustus the commerce of the Roman Empire developed in a remarkable manner, especially in the East, where it was in the hands of Egyptian and Syrian merchants. These latter were remarkably enterprising and Syria became an important commercial centre

Phoenicia, conquered by Alexander the Great, had ceased to exist as a maritime power and had turned all its attention to industry and trade. It seems that Phoenician merchants sent their caravans across Persia and Turkestan and bartered their European goods with the

Chinese for raw silk, which they afterwards wove into precious fabrics

As for the trade of India, Pliny, who was a contemporary of the Apostle St. Thomas values the importations to Rome from that country at 100.000.000. sesterii, about 800.000 pounds sterling annually, a large sum for that period. The bulk of these importations was in precious stones, pearls, spices, perfumes and peacocks. And the same Author says that, in his time 120 ships chartered by Roman merchants, annually visited the western coast of India.¹⁾

Roman trade with India followed three routes

The route of the caravans through Mesopotamia, Persia and Afghanistan led to Purushapura (Peshawar), one of the principal towns of the kingdom of Gandhara, which included the eastern part of Afganistan (Kabulistan) and a belt of north-western India, extending to the Indus and across that river.

It would appear moreover that the Rajas of the small States of Sind were at that epoch vassals of the autocrator of Gandhara. The Gondophares, whose coins have been found, and who was a contemporary of St. Thomas, was probably Maharaja of Gandhara

1) Dahlmann, Die Thomas legende

The two other routes were by sea. One started from Alexandria or rather from Suez, followed the Arabian Coast and led to Sandruk or Andrapolis (Indrapatnam), probably the present Kurachi. The other began at Bosra on the Shatt el Arab, and traversing the Persian Gulf ended like the former at Andrapolis.

From there, following the western coast, the ships called at all the harbours of India where the Romans had commercial agencies (emporia), and where, in consequence, small colonies of Egyptian Jewish and Syrian merchants had established themselves.

As their knowledge of the monsoon became more exact these ancient sailors became bolder and, abandoning the coasting navigation, struck out directly across the ocean for the ports of southern India.

The Roman markets along the west coast of India can be easily found. To name only the principal

The most northerly, consequently the first at which the coasting vessels called was Sanadruk or Andrapolis (Indrapatnam) now Kurachi.

Then came Barbarikon, at the mouth of the Indus.

Barugaza, up the river Narmada, (Nerbudda), whose entrance was extremely dangerous.

Caliana, still called Kalyan. After this port silted up with sand, it was replaced by Thana where ships were still calling in the 13th and 14th centuries. To-day Bombay takes its place

Muziris, an important market in the south, which has been identified with Cranganur called also Maliankara and is now replaced, as a port, by Cochin.

Columbum or Quilon This town was known by the former name as late as the 14th century and is called Columbum in a Bull of Pope John XXII dated 1330. The Blessed Oderic of Udine who lived in the town about the same epoch calls it Palumbum. The Papal Legate John of Marignolli, who resided there in 1349 names the place Columbum. The Portuguese called it Coulam, whence Quilon.

Finally Methora, Matara, on the southern extremity of the Island of Ceylon.

It is more difficult to determine the exact position of the Roman ports of call on the east coast of India along the Bay of Bengal

The whereabouts of Chaberis at the mouth of the river Chaber is easily enough to discover. The river is undoubtedly the Cauvery

It has been maintained on account of the striking

similarity of the names that the very important emporium, which the Romans called *Maliarpha* is the present *Mailepur*. This is by no means impossible, and the tradition tells us that the city of *St Thomas*, was at that time a great commercial entrepôt where ships of all nations put up.

The maps of India based on the works of ancient authors place *Maliarpha* farther north on the delta of the *Godawery*, where stands to-day the town of *Masulipatam*. Still the last port which was visited by Roman sailors, mentioned by *Ptolemy*, *Masolia*, appears to correspond better with *Masulipatam*, for it is not probable that the Roman traders went farther north than the mouth of the *Godawery*. The wares, they came to India in search of, pearls, precious stones and spices were not to be found north of that river, and their ships, of small tonnage, would certainly not venture so far in search of grain or timber which were to be had in abundance at ports much nearer *Rome*.

Maliarpha must therefore have been situated between the mouth of the *Cauvery* and that of the *Godawery*. Then why not *Mailepur* (*Madras*)? The names are identical, and it has been shown in the preceeding pages, that the great Indian commercial markets, occupy at

present the same positions that they did in the days of Ptolemy and Pliny.

It is however a matter of minor importance in discussing the tradition, whether Maliarpha and Mailepur be the same place or not. In the former case it would simply establish the fact that already in the days of St Thomas the town was known by the two names of Calaminur and Mailepuram.

So far, three Roman commercial centres, spoken of in the tradition as having been visited by the Holy Apostle, have been identified Andrapolis (Kurachi), Muziris (Cranganui) and Columbum (Quilon), and perhaps even a fourth Maliarpha (Mailepuram).

It now remains to establish by what route St Thomas reached India.

According to the tradition he came by sea, preaching the Gospel on his way at Aden and Sokotra. St. Francis Xavier who visited Sokotra in 1542, found there a large number of Christians of St Thomas, and the tradition of the Island is so strongly supported by documentary evidence that it cannot be denied.

It is therefore clear that, in coming to India, the Apostle followed the route starting from Alexandria-Suez.

IV

LITURGICAL DOCUMENTS

Liturgical documents positively affirm the preaching and martyrdom of St Thomas in India

The Roman Martyrology revised in 1584 by order of Pope Gregory XIII has the following

— „On the twelfth of the Kalends of January At Calamina. The martyrdom of St Thomas the Apostle, who preached the Gospel to the Parthians the Medes, the Persians and the Hyrcanians Then he went to India where, after having instructed the people in the Christian Faith, he died, pierced with lances by order of the King His relics were carried to Edessa in Mesopotamia and from there to Ortona.

The fifth of nones of July At Edessa in Mesopotamia Translation of St Thomas from India. His relics were subsequently carried to Ortona.“ —

The lessons of the Roman Breviary are more explicit still

„The Apostle St Thomas, called also Didymus, a native of Galilee, visited a great many countries after the descent of the Holy Ghost. He preached the Gospel of Christ to the Parthians, the Medes, the Persians, the Hyrcanians and the Bactrians, to whom he carried the Christian doctrine and its life-giving laws. At last he went among the Indians and taught them the Christian Religion. There, by the sanctity of his life and of his teaching, and by the numerous miracles which he wrought, he kindled the love of Christ, but at the same time aroused the anger of King of the country, who was a worshipper of the idols. Condemned by him to death, he was pierced with lances at Calamina, adding thus the martyrs' crown to the glory of an Apostle “

The Menea of the Greeks make the following mention

„Thou hast made all the land of the Indians shine with splendour, oh ! most holy Apostle, who now rejoicest in the vision of God Thou hast enlightened those children of God and, inspired by the Holy Ghost, thou hast overthrown the temples of their idols Thou hast raised them to the love of God, and the glory' of the Church, oh ! holy patron of our souls ! “

The Greek Menologion — „The thirtieth day of June Commemoration of the twelve Apostles The seventh Thomas Didymus, was pierced with lances by the Indians “ —

The Synlaxarum of the Church of Constantinople — „The 30th day of June Commemoration of the Apostles The seventh, Thomas, called also Didymus He preached the Word of God to the Parthians, the Medes the Persians and the Indians, and was pierced with lances by these latter “ —

Finally, the heretical Liturgies of the Nestorians and Eutychians, both in Asia and in Abyssinia, call St Thomas Apostle of the Indians.

The tradition of the Church is therefore unanimous regarding the Apostolate of St Thomas in India and, both the Breviary and the Roman Martyrology attest that Calamina was the place of his martyrdom

Of the countries which he evangelized, the Medes, the Persians, the Parthians, the Hyrcanians and the Bactrians, formed a compact group corresponding to the present Kingdom of Persia and the Khanate of Bokhara.

The Parthians moreover had conquered the north-west of India, a part of the Punjab and of Sind, the Kingdom of Gandhara

According to the tradition, the Apostle St. Thomas made two voyages or rather two apostolic expeditions, one of which therefore was to Persia and Bokhara, and the other to India.

The tradition fixes the year 68, as the date of the martyrdom of the Apostle. This of course is very uncertain, though nevertheless a quite possible date. It would give the Apostle 35 years to evangelise all these countries

But how long did he remain in India? According to the tradition he spent more than two years, probably a great deal more than two years in Sind and a much longer time on the Coromandel Coast. In the interval between these two periods he evangelised the Malabar Coast, where, according to local tradition he spent eight years

It seems to us, that this term should be diminished in favour of the Mission in Sind, and we would rather give eight years for the Apostle's stay both in Sind and in Malabar. The tradition of Malabar ignores his having been in Sind, and makes him come directly from Jerusalem to Cranganore. It says moreover that he resided at

Mailepur for a much longer time than in any other country of India

According to the constant tradition of Malabar the Apostle arrived in India in the year 52 and won the martyrs palm in the year 68

This is not only possible but extremely probable, seeing that the Council of the Apostles was held in Jerusalem¹⁾ in the year 51

Two Apostolic journeys of St Thomas are mentioned. The first of these was probably devoted to the evangelisation of the countries which make up modern Persia and the Khanate of Bokhara, before the Council of the Apostles; the second took place after the Council and brought the Apostle to India.

That would leave 16 years for his work in India, including, the very uncertain legendary voyage from Mailepur to China.

But would it be possible to accomplish within the space of 16 years the wonderful work attributed to St Thomas? Not a doubt of it, considering the marvellous apostolate of St Francis Xavier in India which

1) Acta. XV

lasted only seven years and three months, ten years altogether including the voyages to the Moluccas and to Japan.

V CALAMINA

The question of the identity of Calamina has also occupied the attention of modern writers. They have sought in vain to locate the place and their laborious inquiries did not solve the question.

No wonder. They begin their researches either by denying the tradition or else affecting to ignore it as of no importance, and are acting like travellers, who take another route than that pointed out by their guide, and wonder why do they fail to reach the inn.

Let us therefore be more prudent and less presumptuous and be guided by the tradition.

Both the Roman Breviary and the Martyrologium assign Calamina as the place of the Martyrdom of the Apostle, and say that Calamina was in India.

Now, is there in India any place which claims the honour of the Martyrdom of the Apostle, which possesses a tradition to support that claim and a tradition worthy of belief?

Ask any Christian in India, an old man or a child, no matter in what part of that vast country, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, where was St. Thomas put to death, and in what place was he first buried, and the invariable answer will be Mailepuram.

In giving an account of the first visit of the Portuguese to the ruins of that town in 1517 Barros says „The whole of Christian India believes that it was here the holy Apostle died and that it was here he built his Church “ 1)

Already then in 1517 it was an old tradition, and for centuries before that date, the Christians of Malabar, crossing India from sea to sea, made pilgrimages to the sanctuary of St. Thomas at Mailepuram.

Mailepuram therefore has always been in possession of the tradition, and what is more, no other town either in India or anywhere else has ever contested with her this honour. By universal consent Mailepur was admitted to have been the scene of the martyrdom of the Holy Apostle.

Further these places watered by the sweat and the blood of St. Thomas had never been abandoned. A

1) Asia Vol VI P 234

monastery was built there, and even after the translation of the relics to Edessa, Monks kept guard upon his first burial place and the mountain of his martyrdom

The first European author who mentions it is St Gregory of Tours (538 593) who speaks of a great church and a monastery — „Templum miræ magnitudinis et monasterium“ —

These Monks became Nestorians, but still continued to guard the tomb of the Apostle, and the spot where he was put to death. When driven out by war and persecution, they entrusted the care of the sanctuary to a few Christian families of the place and waited for the moment when they could return and restore the ruins. Their monastery existed in 1340.

As shall be seen in the following chapters all the ancient travellers who visited these parts speak of the church and the monastery, with the difference however, that, whilst the Catholic travellers mention the church, the Nestorian mention the convent. The reason is that the Catholics would have no dealings with the heretical monks.

The last of this succession of ancient travellers was Nicolas de Conti (1425 1430) who already gives to the

) I gloria martyrum
) Aemman

place the name of Malepur. This name was mentioned for the first time by John of Marignolli in 1349.

Conti says that, at Malepur he saw the sepulchre of the Apostle St. Thomas in a very large and magnificent church „In amplissima ornatissimaeque basilica.“

And the church must have been large and beautiful indeed, to have impressed Nicolas de Conti, accustomed as he was to the splendours of the sanctuaries in Italy.

Then wars broke out and, when 90 years later the Portuguese came to Mailepur they found only ruins. Nevertheless the place of the Apostle's tomb had not been forgotten.

Mailepur then possesses the tradition, unassailed by any other town, supported by documentary evidence and coming down unbroken from the first centuries. Therefore, unless solid historical proofs to the contrary are produced, and such proofs do not exist, it must be admitted that Mailepur is the ancient Calamina.

The difference of name is of no importance. The names of towns can change. In the times of St. Thomas, Paris was called Lutetia and Constantinople Byzantium.

Were the identification of Mailepur, with Ptolemy's

Maliarpha established, which would be dangerous to attempt, as there is nothing to go upon beyond the similarity of the name, and a vague indication of the geographical position of the Roman emporium, it would simply follow, that the town of St Thomas had at that time two names Maiepuram and Calaminur, a thing by no means uncommon in India. Thus Madras, of which Maiepur is now only a suburb, is called in the vernacular Sinnapatnam, and Kandy, where we are writing these lines, will be called Kandy by one who speaks to you in English or in Portuguese but in the vernacular of the country it is known as Mahanuwara

Besides the names of Calaminur and Maiepuram which, at first sight appear so unlike, are by no means so different to the natives of the country who speak Tamil

Min, in Tamil means a fish

Calamin, a particular kind of fish called here a sturgeon, but which is different from the sturgeon of Europe

Maile, is a particular kind of fish, but in literary Tamil, the word is employed as fish in general. Thus Mailé is the word used to name the sign of the Fishes in the Zodiac

Ur, means a small town, a village.

Puram, a large town of a certain importance.

Calaminur therefore and Mailepuram have both the same meaning The town of the fish. The difference between them being that the former expresses it in the vulgar, spoken tongue, the latter in literary language. They are two synonyms, as we would say in English Fishborough and Fishtown.

If instead of Calaminur, we take Kaliminur, it would mean the town of the fish consecrated to the goddess Kali. It is customary in India to add to the name of towns and villages the name of the divinity particularly honoured in them.

But Calaminur corresponds better with the latinised form of the name Calamina

VI

PATRISTIC DOCUMENTS

The liturgical documents of both the Latin and the Eastern Churches, which were adduced in Chapter IV are unanimous in affirming that the Apostle St Thomas, preached the Gospel, and won the crown of martyrdom in India

To the evidence of these documents must be now added the testimony of the Fathers of the Church and early ecclesiastical writers, which, arranged, as we intend to do, in chronological order, make apparent the continuity of the tradition

The legend takes the first place. It is of a very great antiquity

The oldest document dealing with our subject is known as *Abdiae Babyloniae Episcopi et Apostolorum*

discipuli, Certaminis apostolici libri decem, Julio Africano interprete. ¹⁾

If this book were really the work of Abdias it would belong to the first century no matter that Abdias is nowhere mentioned as the first Bishop of Babylon, very few of the names of the Bishops of the first century are known

But if, as it is more probable its author Julius the African, following the custom, common enough at that time, which produced so many apocryphal writings, made use of the name of one Abdias, a disciple of the Apostles, to give credit to his book, it is still none the less certain that this work whether of Abdias or Julius was produced before the beginning of the third century, because the Acta which will be spoken of later on, have certainly drawn from it. In any case, it is of undoubted antiquity, and all the more venerable, that it is a collection of still older traditions and legends.

Father Marcellin da Civezza says that „Although this book has a legendary character and bears the traces of a pious imagination, nevertheless, it is a notable monument of the christian literature of antiquity, and the facts which it contains, even if they have not been

¹⁾ Wolfgang Lazius Basileae 1522

accurately described in every detail, must be considered as substantially true and venerable " —)

After Abdias come the *Acta Sti Thomae*, written, as is commonly believed, in the first half of the third century. The author has certainly drawn upon Abdias, but had other writings besides at his disposal. The existing text has been interpolated and spoiled by absurd and even unwholesome additions.

There are three versions of that work, a Syriac, a Greek and an expurgated Latin text, which however contains many new facts drawn from other sources.

This Latin version is to be found in two short and very ancient works: *Passio S. Thomæ* and *de Miraculis* or *de Virtutibus S. Thomæ Apostoli*.

The first is quoted by S. Gregory of Tours (550) and the second is sometimes, though probably incorrectly, attributed to that famous historian.

We will give a more detailed account of these works in one of the following chapters.)

After these works of great antiquity which recount the

) *Storia delle Missioni Francescane*. Vol. III p. 38.

) Part I Ch. VII.

doings and miracles of St. Thomas in India, comes the testimony of the Fathers of the Church .

The first is St. Ephrem who died in 373,¹⁾ who in his Syriac hymns known as *Carmina Nisibena* has the following references to St Thomas

„And the devil was howling The Apostle whom I put to death in India, has followed me to Edessa. Show me the grave of Judas Iscariot, that will give me courage, but the power which is concealed in the tomb of Thomas tortures me “

And in another hymn „Blessed be thou Thomas the Twin Blessed be thou oh ! Apostle, whom the great King has charged to raise India to the dignity of spouse of his only Son Thou hast rendered the dark spouse, fairer and most beautiful than the snow “

Again in a third hymn „The Lord chose His Apostles, and amongst them Thomas whom he sent to baptise races plunged in darkness A dark night shrouded India Thomas arose and like a shining sun he scattered the darkness, and shed on that country floods of light “

The Right Rev. Bishop Medlycott who has translated

1) I have seen, but not been able to verify the following quotation of Dorotheus of Tyr, (pseudo Dorotheus) who lived a century before St Ephrem — „The Apostle Thomas suffered martyrdom at Calamina in India “ —

these hymns says — „In order to seize the full weight and importance of the above evidence, it is most important for the reader to bear in mind, that the facts relating to the Apostle in connection with his evangelisation of India, here set forth, are not attested only by one individual, St Ephraem, but carry with them the assent of a whole Church, that of Edessa “ — ”

Now, at that epoch, Edessa was in constant communication with India, and it was from this town that priests were sent to minister to the Christians of St Thomas, a fact which, later on, drew them into the Nestorian heresy

St Gregory of Nazyanz (330 389) replying to the Greeks of Constantinople who reproached him with being a foreigner said — „And the Apostles, were they not foreigners Andrew in Epirus, John in Ephesus and Thomas in India ? “ — ”

St Ambrose who died in 397, speaking of the Apostles writes — „Even kingdoms shut in by rugged mountains were accessible to them, as India to Thomas and Persia to Mathew “ — ”

) India and St. Thomas p. 11.

) Homilia 13 Contra Arianos et de seipso

2) Ennaratio in Ps. 45

And St. John Chrysostom (344 to 407) „How could the Apostles, who spoke only Hebrew, draw all these peoples to the Faith? How were they able to preach to the Scythians, the Indians, the Sarmatians? It was because the Holy Ghost had given them the gift of tongues.

They raised altars everywhere, amongst the Romans, the Persians, the Scythians, the Moors and the Indians

We know not where the bones of Aaron, Daniel or Jeremias are laid to rest, but we do know the place of burial of Peter, John and of Thomas.“ ¹⁾

St Jerome (died 720) says „Christ dwells everywhere, with Thomas in India and with Peter in Rome.“ ²⁾

St Gregory of Tours (538-593) is more explicit „St Thomas the Apostle, as the history of his passion relates, suffered martyrdom in India. (In India passus declaratur) A long time afterwards, his body was transported to Edessa in Syria, where it at present reposes

In that part of India in which he was buried, there is a monastery, and a very large church (templum mirae

1) Com In Epist ad Hebr Homilia XXII

2) Ep 59 Ad Marcellinum

magnitudinis) richly adorned and of great architectural beauty I have been told this by Theodore who visited those parts " — "

And St Bede the Venerable (673 735) — „Peter received Rome for his share, Andrew Achaia, James Spain and Thomas India " — "

Finally in 880, the Anglo Saxon monk Aelfric, translated from Greek the legend of St Thomas, the *Acta Thomae* mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. This translation gave the legend great vogue during the Middle Ages. Then the Renaissance and Humanism, which had more than one point of resemblance with the modernism of to day, put the legend aside and caused it to be forgotten. After remaining long in oblivion it begins now, again, to attract attention.

) I gloria martyrum.

2) Collectanea.

VII

THE EARLY TRAVELLERS

Three years after the translation of the legend by the Monk Aelfric, King Alfred the Great of England, in fulfilment of a vow he had made, sent Sighelm Bishop of Sherbourne and Athelstan in 883 on a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Thomas

Of this journey, the chronicle of William of Malmesbury, written in 1120 gives the following account

„King Alfred sent rich offerings beyond the seas to Rome and to St Thomas in India His envoy, Bishop Sighelm of Sherbourne, after a prosperous voyage, a wonderful journey for those days, reached India in safety and returned to England bringing with him all kind of exotic splendours, precious stones and perfumes which abound in those countries.“¹⁾

After the pilgrimage of Sighelm of Sherbourne, there is a break of four centuries.

1) De gestis regum Anglorum

In the year 1252, Pope Innocent III founded the first Society of Missionaries in order to evangelise the peoples of the far East. This society was composed of Franciscan and Dominican Friars and was called *Societas peregrinantium pro Christo*. It was the dawn of our modern Missions.

A member of this Society, John of Monte Corvino, born in 1247, appointed first Archbishop of Peking in 1307, died in 1328, speaks in his letters of the tomb of the Apostle St Thomas, which he visited in 1298.

— „I spent thirteen months, he says, in India near to St Thomas Church, and I baptised in different places there, about a hundred people. My companion Friar Nicholas of Pistoja died there, and was buried in the Church “ — ”

One year later, in 1293, the place was visited by the famous traveller Marco Polo.

— „The body of St Thomas the Apostle, he says, reposes in the province of Maabar, in a certain small town with few inhabitants. Few merchants visit this place, because merchandise is not abundant and access is difficult.

Nevertheless, it is frequented by Christians and

1) Letters,

Saracens, who go there in pilgrimage, because the Saracens also hold St. Thomas in great veneration, and call him Avarian¹⁾ which means Saint.

The Christian pilgrims carry away earth from the spot where the Saint was killed, and this they afterwards employ in cases of tertian or quartan fever and, by the grace of God and through the merits of the Saint, these maladies are cured. And this earth, is of a red colour.

The Christians, who are in charge of this church, have a large number of trees which produce Indian nuts, on which they live, and for which they pay a tax to one of two brothers who are kings in those parts."

Marco Polo's account is very important for the reason that it is the first document, which makes it possible to determine the place of St. Thomas' martyrdom and where he was first buried

It was, he says, in the province of Maabar (Malabar) consequently in the south of India, in a place where the cocoa-nuts were the principal resource of the inhabitants, therefore not far from the sea.

At the outset therefore it would appear that, in speaking of Malabar, he puts himself in contradiction with

1) Andaver

the tradition which assigns as the place of martyrdom and first burial of the Apostle the town of Mailepur situated on the Coromandel or south eastern Coast of India

But this apparent contradiction is easily explained. The early travellers who came from Europe, first came in contact with the Tamils who inhabit the south of Malabar between Trivandrum and Cape Comorin and called them Malabars.

And this name was extended to all the Tamils. Tamil was called the language of the Malabars in opposition with Malayalam, the language spoken all along the Malabar Coast.

In the life of St. Francis Xavier when there is question of Tamil, they always say that he was learning or that he was preaching in the tongue of the Malabars.

The constitution of Pope Benedict XIV, *de ritibus Malabaricis*, of the 12 September 1744, which is still in force, has nothing to do whatever with the Malabar Coast. It has been made for the Coromandel Coast and for the adjoining Tamil countries. Malabar rites means Tamil rites.

And even to this day, along the Coromandel Coast especially in the French Settlements the Tamils are still called Malabars.

In reading the ancient authors, and even modern authors down to the middle of the nineteenth century, it is necessary to distinguish between *the Malabar Coast*, which extends on the south-west of India from Cannanore to Cape Comorin and *the country of the Malabars*, which includes the Coromandel Coast and the country in the interior as far as the mountains.

Therefore, Marco Polo, when he places the tomb of St. Thomas near the sea-shore in the province of Maabar, that is in the country of the Tamils, indicates clearly the Coromandel Coast.

He says also that the tomb is situated in a small town. Now, the Tamil name of Madras of which Mailepur is a suburb, is Sinnapatnam, which means the small town. This however is only a coincidence. The main point is that Marco Polo places the tomb of St Thomas on the Coromandel Coast.

The Blessed Oderic of Udine never visited himself the tomb of the Apostle. He wrote down all that had been told him about it at Quilon

„Ten days journey from here lies the kingdom of Mabar, which is of great extent, and possesses many towns and territories. It was in that kingdom that the body of

St Thomas the Apostle was first buried. The church is now full of idols. About fifteen Nestorian families are living around. They are Christians, but abominable heretics " —

It is apparent then, that about 1324 the year in which the Bl Oderic wrote, the monks had been driven away and the few families guarding the tomb had relapsed into paganism.

It is also to be noted that the Blessed Oderic, who was then at Quilon on the Malabar Coast, speaks of the Kingdom of the Malabars as being situated at a distance of ten days journey (*decem diebus*) from Quilon.

The monks however must have come back to their monastery very soon afterwards, for Assemani writes that according to the Nestorian traveller Amru, who visited the spot in 1340, the tomb of St Thomas was at Mulan in the monastery dedicated to the Apostle, to the right of the altar.

The Franciscan John of Marignolli, Bishop of Bisignano in Calabria and Legate of Pope Clement VI to the emperor of China, spent more than a year amongst the Christians of St Thomas at Quilon. In 1349, the season

being favourable for sailing, he made a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Thomas

„This province of India he says is called Maabar. In it, still stands the church which the Apostle built with his own hands and another built by workmen. After having converted the Parthians, the Medes and the Indians he won the palm of martyrdom at Mirapolis in India, where his blood is still venerated at the present day “

He relates the legend of the miracle of the log of wood, of which an account will be given later on. The Apostle, he says got a large tree cut at Ceylon and bringing it to the sea-shore pushed it into the water saying Go to the harbour of Mirapolis and await there my arrival.

This is the first mention of Malepur, and it may be observed once again, how Bishop John of Marignolli who was staying on the Malabar Coast, undertakes a long journey by sea, to reach the Kingdom of the Malabars, the country of the Tamils.

The last of this series of ancient travellers was Nicolas de Conti in 1430. „We continued our journey farther, he says, and arrived to a town on the sea-coast called Malepur, situated on the second gulf beyond the Indus.

It is here that the body of St Thomas is buried in a large and very beautiful church (Hic Corpus S Thomæ honorifice sepultum in amplissimâ ornâtissimâque basilica) It is taken care of by heretics who are called Nestorians, and who are in the town to the number of one thousand These Nestorians are scattered over India like the Jews with us " —

Finally in 1504 the Nestorian Patriarch of Bagdad sent four Bishops to take care of the Christians of the Malabar Coast (which they did in their own fashion as will appear later on) On their arrival these Bishops addressed a report to the Patriarch in which they say

— „The neighbourhood of the tomb of St Thomas the Apostle, begins to be inhabited again by Christians who keep the tomb in a state of repair The place is situated in a maritime town called Meliapor at a distance of 25 days journey from this Malabar Coast " —)

The beautiful basilica therefore which Nicolas de Conti had visited in 1430, had been destroyed and in 1504 a few Nestorian heretics were doing all they could to prevent the tomb of the Apostle from falling into decay

The same report continues — „Our Fathers should

also know, that powerful ships have been sent to this coast of India, from the west, by our brethren the Franks The voyage lasts a whole year, after which they land in the port of Calicut “

And thus we have reached the Portuguese period

The foregoing quotations are sufficient to prove the constant and uninterrupted tradition for fifteen centuries, that India was the theatre of the Apostolate and martyrdom of St Thomas

The place where he died and that of his first burial were never abandoned They were marked out from the beginning by a Church and by a monastery, whose monks were the guardians of the Apostle's tomb Both Church and monastery were many times destroyed, but they were always rebuilt.

The earliest authors do not give the name of the town which first held the remains of the holy Apostle, but in those days, India was so far away and so little known in Europe, that nobody cared about the name of a town

Even at the present time, how often people say, such a one died in Australia, but who cares whether it was at Perth or at Sydney

But these quotations prove clearly that the Apostle St Thomas won the crown of martyrdom in India, in the south of that country, in the land of the Tamils, on the Coromandel Coast, at Malepur

VIII

SIND

We think that we have established clearly enough the fact that St Thomas the Apostle preached the Gospel in India. It now remains to see what parts of that vast region were evangelised by him.

Let us therefore proceed to India, and take tradition as our guide

Three countries of India Sind, the Malabar Coast, and Mailepur have a firmly established tradition that they were visited by the Apostle

Let us take first Sind The legend says that St Thomas landed at Andrapolis which is a greco-roman corruption of Indrapatnam Now this port of Andrapolis was situated in the north of Barbarikon, a market town at the mouth of the Indus St. Thomas therefore landed at Kurachi or in the vicinity of this town, consequently in Sind

The same legend speaks of his relations with King

Gondophares, and that was one of the principal reasons brought forward by those who denied the authenticity of the legend. Gondophares, they said, is not an Indian name, and consequently could never have been borne by an Indian prince.

This opinion prevailed until 1834 when a coin bearing the name of a King Gondophares, and which, according to the opinion of competent archeologists belonged to the first century of our era, was found in Afganistan.

Similar coins were found afterwards in Cabul, Kandahar, Seistan, and in the north and west of Punjab, which countries were parts of the ancient Indo Parthian kingdom of Gandhara, and all along the caravan route from India to Mesopotamia.

These coins which can be seen in the British Museum, in the Bibhotheque Nationale in Paris and in the Museum of Berlin bear on one side a Greek inscription, in which Gondophares styles himself King of Kings Basileos Basileon and Autocrator. On the reverse there is an Indian inscription, in which he is given the title of Maharaja and in which his name appears in varying forms Gundaphara, Gandapharissa and Gomdapharnassa.

Other coins, found more recently and probably struck by his Vassals, bear the name of Gondophares and, in the

Museum of Lahore, there is preserved a stone monument which mentions the reign of this King.

Further interesting details and reproductions of these coins will be found in Bishop Medlycott's learned book.

For our purpose, it is sufficient to demonstrate that archeological science has proved, that there was a King Gondophares, contemporary of St. Thomas, who ruled in India and who, as is shown by the countries in which these coins were found was King of Gandhara, a Kingdom which, at that epoch included eastern Afganistan, a part of Punjab and Sind as far as the Indus and some distance to the east of that river.

This discovery makes it clear, that the legend which speaks of the relations of St Thomas with King Gondophares, and which was considered as fictitious, rests, on the contrary, upon a historical foundation. All the more so, because Gondophares, the fact of whose existence has now been established, is mentioned in no historical document other than the legend.

In what part of Gandhara did St Thomas preach ?

The tradition confines itself to Sind, and, as no trace remains of the existence of ancient Christian communities

to the north of these territories, we can safely conclude that the Apostle worked in the south of Sind

The legend says that King Gondophares, having made all arrangements for the construction of his palace, left the town of Helioforum, and went into another part of his Kingdom. He did not revisit Helioforum for two years, which he probably spent in one or the other of his two capitals. These are supposed to have been Cabul and Purushapura (Peshawar). This however is a mere supposition.

The fruit of St. Thomas' preaching were those great Christian communities of Sind, mentioned by St. John Damascene, who says that, at the time when the disciples of St. Paul and of St. Antony flourished in the desert of Thebaida, a great number of Indian anachoretes imitated their example, and in a desert not far from the Indus led lives of astonishing sanctity and austerity. He mentions amongst them St. Barlaam whose feast the Church celebrates on the 27 November. Monastic life was also developed and several Bishops governed that faithful flock.

What became of these Christians of St. Thomas in Sind is not known. They adhered, or rather were drawn into the Nestorian heresy, and, as most Nestorian churches

in the East, embraced the faith of Mahomet or returned back to heathenism.

How long time did St. Thomas remain in Sind? All that the legend says is that he dwelled there for more than two years, but how much more is not known.

Which town in Sind was the centre of his activity, the place where he lived and whence radiated the influence of his apostolate? The legend calls it Helioforum

It must have been an important place if King Gondophares wanted to build there for himself a magnificent palace, and moreover the legend tells us, that St Thomas used to make his headquarters in the principal town of the countries he visited

It could not have been very far from the place where he landed, because the Raja of Andrapolis or Indrapatnam visited there the Apostle with his whole family and asked for baptism, and it must have had a communication by water with that harbour town, because the legend says that St Thomas sailed from there to Helioforum. Consequently to reach this place he had either to go by sea, or to go up the Indus.

The only other topographical indication is, that near the town there was a mountain called Gazi

It seems to us, that, with so much surety as one can get from legendary data, we may conclude that the place where St Thomas resided was Hyderabad, the ancient Narankot, the present capital of Sind, situated about three miles from the left bank of the Indus

It is clear that Helioforum is not a corruption but rather a more or less exact translation of the Indian name of the town

Helios, it is hardly necessary to remark, means the sun or the god of the sun

Forum applied to a town, must be taken in the sense of Forum rerum venarum, emporium, the commercial part of the town, the City, or as they say in India The Fort

Narankot, in Sanscrit Narayanakotta, in modern Hindi Narayankot is also made up of two words Narayan and Kotta.

Narayan is a name commonly given to Vishnu, and as Vishnu is spoken in the Vedas as a manifestation of

solar energy, that god might very well have been confounded by the Roman merchants of that period with the sun or the god of the sun, Helios. Even the Indians, at that period of the revival of Brahmanism, connected Vishnu with the sun. There would therefore be nothing surprising in the translation of Vishnu-Narayan by Helios

Kotta in Sanscrit, and in the languages of India derived from Sanscrit, means a fort, a fortified place, the part of the town which was surrounded by a fortified wall

This word is still in common use. Thus the fort of Bombay, the Fort of Colombo (Kotta, Kot, Kottuwa) means the quarter of those towns, which had formerly been surrounded by a fortified wall, also the commercial part of the town. An Indian would call Kotta, the City in London.

And the third century compiler of the legend, who was undoubtedly acquainted with India, knew what he did when he called the town Helioforum and not Heliopolis. Forum is certainly a better equivalent for Kotta And Helioforum is the correct translation for Narayanakotta, Narankot.

It is just possible however that he did not think of the sun at all, but merely substituted for the name of a Hindu

god that of a greek one, and thus made Helioforum from Narankot the city of Vishnu. Later on, in the same legend he gives again the name of deus Sol, Helios, to an idol of the goddess Kali worshipped at Maalepur. The attributes of the Hindu divinities are not very clear.

It may be objected perhaps that the contraction or abbreviation of Naraynakotta in Narankot is not grammatically correct. But then, it must be remembered that commonly it is not the learned grammarians but the ignorant common people who abridge the names of towns that are too long or of a difficult pronunciation.

As for the mountain Garı, and this is an important point in determining the position of Helioforum, the town of Hyderabad, the ancient Narankot is build on the last spur of a range of chalky hills called Ganjo, a name that travellers from foreign lands might easily corrupt into Gazi.

We may therefore admit, without any great risk, that Helioforum, the town of St. Thomas was Narankot, to-day Hyderabad, the capital of Sind.

IX

THE MALABAR COAST

The tradition of the Apostle St. Thomas has maintained a stronger hold on the Malabar Coast, than in any other part of India.

„The Church of Malabar, writes the Rev Fr Kaliankara, has always considered, recognized and honoured St Thomas as its Apostle.

The proof of this is to be found in the numerous churches dedicated from the most ancient times to the Apostle, the sanctuaries which exist throughout the whole of Malabar and which are venerated not only by the Christians, but also by the infidels, who go there in pilgrimage.

The pagans, the mahomedans and even the jews that inhabit this coast all hold that St Thomas preached the Gospel there. A legend exist amongst the pagans to the effect that St Thomas destroyed the idol of one of their goddesses and threw down her temple, and the mahomedans honour St. Thomas as a great prophet.“¹⁾

1) *Defensio Indici Apostolatus S Thomae,*

The feast of St Thomas which is celebrated on the 3^d of July, is for the Malabar Christians the feast of the year. In every family there is a boy called Thomas, and of all the countries of the world, the one without doubt in which St Thomas is most honoured is the Malabar Coast. It is the land of St Thomas.

As far back as history brings their record they are called Christians of St Thomas which in itself is a conclusive fact.

It is also on the Malabar Coast that the Christians of St Thomas still exist. They number about half a million.

The Catholics are about 350000 and form a flourishing Church governed by five Bishops all Indians (all consecrated by us) and a numerous native Clergy.

The remaining 150000 are jacobites. These have lost the right to call themselves Christians of St Thomas, for they have abandoned the Apostle of Christ to follow the heresiarch Eutichius.

Notwithstanding the strong tradition, the apostolate of St Thomas on this coast is not confirmed by such strong evidence, as his preaching in Sind and at Mulepur,

between which the Apostolate in Malabar must be placed.

Abdias of Babylon makes no more than a short mention of it. After giving the legend of Sind, he says - „And after these events, the holy Apostle visited other Kingdoms of India, announcing everywhere the Gospel of the Saviour, working many miracles and converting the people to Jesus-Christ.“

According to the local tradition, St Thomas landed at Cranganore whither he came by sea, and there commenced to preach.

This was the natural course for him to follow. Cranganore, the ancient Muziris was the principal emporium of the Romans on the south-west coast of India. There was in that town a colony of Syrian merchants and a fairly large number of Jews.¹⁾ There was nothing surprising in the fact that the Apostle came there or that he should begin his preaching in a town where people from his own country lived.

He visited many places, amongst others Quilon and founded seven churches or rather seven great mission

1) See Appendix V

centres, some of which still exist, and erected in other places large stone crosses

How long the Apostle remained on the Malabar Coast is impossible to determine. He must however have remained a long time as is shown by the work attributed to him and by the fact that the Christians of St. Thomas consider him as their first Bishop.

According to the local legend, St. Thomas stayed eight years on the Malabar Coast, and after his departure for Mailepur, twice revisited Malabar. This is not impossible, but apart the local tradition, there is no documentary evidence.

There is no evidence whatever of his having visited Ceylon and Madura nor of his journey from Mailepur to China.

But about his apostolate in Malabar there can be no doubt. It is confirmed by a tradition of such character, that it cannot be set aside or ignored.

When the Portuguese landed in India for the first time on the 22 May 1498 they found on the Malabar Coast large Christian communities. This is what the historian Barros wrote in his work published in 1552

„When the Portuguese landed at Cranganore, they found there many Christians of St Thomas, the Holy Apostle having left several Churches and converted many to the Christian Faith.“¹⁾

„Notwithstanding the fact that all Christians of India are agreed that St. Thomas died at Meliapor, where he had built a Church, there was at the time of our arrival in India a much greater number of Christians at Cranganore and at Diamper, in the neighbourhood of Cochin, than at Paliacat²⁾ near which the body of St. Thomas was buried.

The reason is that the Christians, expelled during the war in which the town of Meliapur was destroyed, emigrated west-ward to Cranganore and Diamper, where there were many of their coreligionists.

And the reason why there were so many Christians at Cranganore and Diamper and all along the Malabar Coast as far as Quilon was, that they owned churches founded at the time when St. Thomas was there

We have been told that, at Cranganore, which is five leagues from Cochin, as well as at Quilon, there is a church

1) Da Asia Vol I p 446

2) Palicat, a small town situated a little to the North of Madras and Mailepur, in which at that time the Portuguese Captain, or Governor of the Coromandel Coast had his residence

constructed by two disciples of St Thomas. On account of this origin, both these churches are held in great veneration. These disciples, whom St Thomas left in Malabar, when he set out for the Coromandel Coast, had been buried on the spot where stands the tower which the Portuguese put up, when they built the fortress of Cranganore.

And as the Armenian (Nestorian) Patriarch sent Bishops from time to time to visit these Christians, they preserved better than the others, the knowledge of Christ.

But these Armenian Bishops, who were thus sent to visit the Christians of the Malabar Coast, were so avaricious, that they came to India, not in order to serve God, but for the sake of filthy lucre. They had to be paid for administering the Sacrament of Baptism and, as the people were poor, but few were baptised. They had few priests, because no one was ordained, unless he paid them a large sum of money. These priests said their office in Chaldean.

A few years before the arrival of the Portuguese in India, the Armenian Patriarch had sent four Bishops¹ to divide the country amongst themselves. Two of them

1) See Chap. VIII

died shortly after their arrival. Of the other two, the younger settled at Quilon and the elder at Cranganore.

This latter was a good man and ceased from oppressing the Christians extorting money from them. The Governor Nuno da Cunha favoured him on account of his virtues, and he himself had great sympathies for the Catholic priesthood and the customs of the Church of Rome.“ 1)

This Bishop of whom Barros speaks was Abuna Jacob, the friend of St. Francis Xavier. He had abjured the Nestorian heresy, and together with the Franciscan Fathers, worked for the conversion of the Christians of St Thomas to the Catholic faith.

At an advanced age, and broken by a long life of hard and unremitting toil, he withdrew to Goa. In a letter to the King of Portugal John III, St Francis Xavier says of him „He is a man whom God loves, on account of his virtues and of the sanctity of his life.“ 2)

In the time of St. Francis Xavier there were already about the town of Cranganore sixty Catholic villages, and in the town itself a Seminary in which the sons of the first families were trained for the priesthood

1) Da Asia Vol VI p 234

2) Cochin VIII Kal Febr 1549

MAILEPUR

Let us now undertake the long journey across the continent of India, from the Coast of Malabar, to the country of the Malabars or Tamils, the Coast of Coromandel

The tradition of the Apostle's death at Mailepur possesses strong documentary evidence and is as solid as any tradition can be, and in order to demolish it, historical documents of undoubted authenticity and indisputable value should be produced

And, as has already been stated such documents do not exist, and no other town, no other place in the wide world has ever contested with Mailepur the honour of being the place of the Martyrdom of the Apostle St Thomas

Mailepur is in possession of the tradition, a secular, undisturbed and uncontested tradition, and clear proofs are required in order to demolish it

It is true, that the name of the town is not mentioned by the earliest writers All they say is that it was in

India. But it is quite clear that they all refer to one and the same place.

Marco Polo in 1293 and the blessed Oderic of Udine in 1325 place it on the Coromandel Coast, in the land of the Malabars, the Tamils. The first mention of the name of the town is made by the Syrian traveller Amru (1340). He calls it Mailan. John of Marignolli (1349) calls it Mirapolis, and Nicolas de Conti (1430) Malepur.

When the Portuguese reached India in 1498, says Barros ¹⁾ all the Christians of that country were unanimous on the point, that the Apostle S. Thomas suffered martyrdom at Mailepur, and that he had resided there a longer time than in any other part of India. And John of Marignolli gathered the tradition on the spot, from the people, who told him that, when the Apostle fell pierced with lances, the priests collected in a vessel of clay the earth soaked with his blood, and placed it in the tomb with the body.

In 1533 the Viceroy Nuno da Cunha ordered an inquiry to be made, concerning all the existing Indian traditions of the Apostle St. Thomas. On that occasion the Bishop Abuna Jacob, to whom the reader has already

1) Da Asia Vol I p 446, and Vol VI p 234

been introduced, deposed that, visiting since twenty years the Christians of the Malabar Coast, he had always heard them say that, according to the ancient tradition, St Thomas had established at Mailepur a large Christian community, and that it was there that the two miracles of the log of timber and of the resurrection of the Brahmin child took place ¹⁾

At that same enquiry a Frenchman and several native Christians deposed, that they had heard from old Christians, as well as from Moors and pagans that, fifteen centuries ago the Apostle St Thomas arrived at Mailepur which was such a beautiful and flourishing town, that it had been called Meliapore, that is the city of the peacock, the peacock being the most beautiful of all birds ²⁾

The country being exceedingly fertile and rich in products of every kind was visited by ships from many countries of the East and of the West. Thus great numbers of foreigners of different nationalities were constantly to be found in the harbour and each nation had its own temples and adored its own gods

It is said that there were as many as one thousand three hundred temples, whose ruins, covered with

¹⁾ De Asia Vol. VI. p. 232.

²⁾ Malabarum. Mail the peacock and parrot town.

exquisite sepulchres, could still be seen at the time of the coming of the Portuguese.¹⁾

When the town was destroyed a violent persecution raged against the Christians, which forced them away from Mailepur. They emigrated and settled down amongst their brethren the Christians of St. Thomas on the Malabar Coast

But the tomb of the Apostle was never abandoned. Through the course of centuries a church and a monastery kept faithful guard upon it. And, if as it sometimes happened in the course of frequent wars, the church was destroyed and the monks expelled, there always remained until quieter times, when the monks could return and the Church be rebuilt, a body of Christians, who looked after the tomb of the Apostle and the place of his martyrdom.

Barros relates, how the Portuguese discovered the tomb of St. Thomas²⁾

„One of the things, he writes, which the King Dom Emmanuel recommended most particularly to the Governors of India, was to investigate as carefully as possible, what knowledge the Indians possessed of the life

1) Barros Da Asia Vol III p 229

2) Da Asia Vol III pp 222 a 229

of St Thomas, and whether it was true that his body still reposed in these parts. His son King John III, was equally interested in this matter.

And as we have promised to relate what the Christians in India say about the Apostle, who is our patron in India as St James is the patron of Spain we will do it now that we possess on that subject the informations brought together by Edward de Menezes.

Nuno da Cunha then Governor of India in obedience to the orders of the King, charged the captain of Pulicat Michael Ferreira to make investigations, and sent him certain notes, which had been put together by the King, and which contained the life of the Apostle according to the traditions of the Church of Rome in order to see whether they agreed with the tradition of the Indian Christians.

But we were already acquainted with this tradition even before Edward de Menezes had begun his investigations.

The first account that the Portuguese got of the tomb of the Apostle was in 1517.

Diego and Sebastian Fernandez and some other Portuguese, coming from Malacca landed at Pulicat

They had travelled together with an Armenian named Coje Eskander, who had been in Pulicat before, whilst making the journey from Cape Comorin to Bengal, and who had visited the place where, according to tradition, St. Thomas the Apostle had been buried

As the winds were unfavourable, and they were forced to remain at Pulicat, Coje Eskander proposed to the Portuguese to go in pilgrimage to the Apostle's tomb

When they arrived to the spot whither the Armenian conducted them, they found a vast expanse covered with buildings, for the most part in ruins. Amongst these ancient remains were pyramids¹⁾ towers, columns and other stones all covered with sculptures representing foliage, human figures, animals birds, of such a exquisite workmanship, that they could not have been finer even wrought in silver. And yet, the stone was extremely hard and difficult to work. The stones were black or white and often gray, and all these monuments gave a sufficient indication of the lost magnificence of the city.

In the midst of all these antiquities, stood a Church, sadly dilapidated, all that remained intact was a small chapel build in brick and mortar, roofed with tiles and

1) Gopurams

surmounted with a spire. On the walls of this chapel as well as on those of the church, both inside and outside was to be seen a great number of crosses, resembling very much in appearance the cross of the Portuguese Order of Aviz.

We found there an old Moorman. He was seventy years of age and had been there for several days having come on a pilgrimage, to ask the Apostle to restore his sight which he had lost. He told us, that his father and grandfather although pagans had been the caretakers of that chapel. He himself had been a mahomedan for ten years, but his ancestors, who were natives of that place, were Christians.

Questioned by us as to his knowledge of the saint, he replied, that the chapel was said to have been built by the Apostle, who preached in it the religion of the Christians, and when he died, was buried there, and on that account it was held in great veneration, even after the destruction of the body of the church. It was also said, that two disciples of the Apostle and the King, whom he had converted to the Christian Faith, were also buried with him. And he knew no more.

Two years later, in 1519 the place was visited by

Lope and John Falcão and John_Moreno, who were told that a Hungarian Gentleman, whose name was George, who had come from his own country on a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle, had just been buried in the chapel.

Dom Edward de Menezes having heard these reports bethought himself of the orders of the King and, in 1522 appointed Emmanuel de Frias Captain of the Coromandel Coast, instructing him to rebuild the Church and restore it to divine worship, and sent there a priest called Alvare Pentado.

But as the devil is always trying to hinder the work of God, what should happen but that even before the work had begun, Alvare Pentado returned to Portugal Emmanuel de Frias appointed then to replace him an old and pious priest called Peter Fernandez

In the following year Dom Edward sent the same Emmanuel de Frias, back again to the Coromandel Coast, with a priest called Antony Gil and an architect Vincent Fernandez and gave them the money required for the restauration of the chapel

Whilst they were digging a trench in a corner of the chapel in order to strengthen the spire which threatened

to fall, they found at a depth of five feet a grave covered with a stone slab bearing on its under surface an inscription in the language of the Badagis¹ the language spoken in the country. In this inscription it was stated that, when St Thomas was building the church, the King of Melapor, granted to him a tenth of all the custom dues levied on goods imported there by sea, and that he recommended his successors to continue this grant to the church.

This was the explanation given by a Brahmin whom they called to decipher the inscription. In order to make sure however, another learned Brahmin was brought from a distant place, without a word being said to him about the first version. He was asked to translate the inscription, which he did in full accord with the first.

Under this stone, in the tomb lay the bones of a man, whom the people of the country believed, to be the King whom St Thomas had converted to the Faith of Christ.

Emmanuel de Frias, being obliged to return to Pulicat left behind him at Melapor two priests, Antony Gil and Peter Fernandez, to continue the work of restoration.

When the interior of the chapel in which the Apostle

¹ In Tamil.

had been buried was taken in hand, Antony Gil, being unwilling to set pagans to work in this sacred spot, called in Diego Fernandez and Braz Diaz, who dwelt in the neighbourhood. These declared that they would not dare to do a hand's turn in the chapel, until they had made themselves worthy to work at the tomb of the Apostle by making a good confession and receiving Holy Communion

This they did, and then set to work with hearts full of holy thoughts. Whilst excavating under the pavement, they came across a grave, right well built of bricks and mortar about fifteen feet deep and filled with clay. Beneath this clay, there was a layer of cement, so hard that they broke through it with difficulty.

The cement covered two great slabs of stone placed one over the other so as to form a tomb in which a skeleton was found. Besides the skeleton the tomb contained a lance-head having a short piece of the shaft attached, a wooden staff pointed with iron and an earthenware pot, of the capacity of a bushel filled with earth, and nothing more.¹⁾

The common opinion, confirmed by the presence of the lance-head was that these bones were those of the

1) See the account of Marignolli at the beginning of this chapter

Apostle. This belief was accepted all the more readily, because the skeleton was white, whilst that of the King and another of one of the disciples of the Apostle which was found afterwards were of the colour of the clay. It was believed then, that, as St Thomas died pierced with a lance, these were the bones of the Apostle.¹

As soon as this discovery was made Antony Gil wrote at once to Emmanuel de Frias, and told him that the bones would not be touched until his arrival, and asked him to bring a suitable casket in which the relics of the Apostle might be deposited.

Frias hastened to Meliapor and brought with him a beautiful silver mounted coffer of Chinese workmanship. In this were placed the bones of the Apostle, and in another those of the King and the disciple. After the relics had been carried in solemn procession Emmanuel de Frias set out for Goa, to bring the news to the Viceroy Dom Edward de Menezes.

Two years after this, Fr. Alvares Pentado returned from Portugal and took charge of the sanctuary. On his arrival, he had the bones placed in a coffin of wood and

¹) They were certainly not the Apostle's bones, as his relics had been brought to Edessa in the first half of the third century. They may have been those of St. Nicholas of Pistoia (See Chap. VII).

buried below the altar in a spot known only to himself and to Rodriguez Alvarez."

These last words of Barros mean simply that, as soon as it was discovered, that the bones were not the relics of the Apostle, they were quietly suppressed.

There exist an obscure legend to the effect that the disciple of the Apostle whose remains were found in the chapel of Mailepur was Gaspar, one of the three wise Kings who were led by the star to Christ to Bethlehem. According to this legend Gaspar would have been King of Jaffna in Ceylon, and was called in his country Peria-Perumal.¹⁾ After having adored our Lord he returned to his own country. As soon as he heard of St. Thomas' arrival in India, he crossed over to meet him, was baptised by the Apostle, and from that time became his faithful companion. He was martyred with St. Thomas, and buried in the same grave.

There is no difficulty in admitting that St. Thomas baptised Gaspar. Indeed, according to the tradition he baptised all the three wise Kings. Moreover, a very ancient tradition attributed to Dorotheus of Tyr, gives to

1) Peria means great, and Perumal, an illustrious, eminent man

one of the three Kings the name of Peria Perumal, which is undoubtedly an Indian name

But the story of the martyrdom and burial at Mailepur cannot be admitted. The tradition speaks of St Thomas alone, and says nothing about another having been put to death with him. Besides the martyrdom of St Thomas took place in the year 68, by which date, all the three Kings were most probably already dead.

Twenty years after the events narrated by Barros, in May 1545 St Francis Xavier visited Mailepur and stayed there for over four months.

He was then undecided, as to whether he was to continue his Apostolate in India, or go to carry to the far off Moluccas the Faith of Jesus Christ. In this uncertainty, he used to spend his nights in prayer on the tomb of St Thomas, begging God to make known to him His holy will. In a letter addressed to James de Borba and Paul of Camerino he writes

— „I betook myself to the town of St Thomas, and to the sanctuary of the Apostle where, with assiduous prayer I implored of God to make known to me his holy will to which I was firmly resolved to conform myself. And I had full confidence that Qui dedit velle, daret

etiam perficere. And God, in his mercy remembered me, and whilst He filled my soul with an ineffable joy, I was made to understand that it was the will of God, that I should betake myself to Malacca and go thence to Macassar, in order to confirm in the Faith the neophytes who have been lately converted."¹⁾

At that epoch, Mailepur was no longer a city of ruins. The church and chapel had been rebuilt and Portuguese in large number had settled down around the sanctuary. They were for the most part retired government officials and soldiers, who came there to end their days in peace, under the shadow of the Apostle's tomb. A large number of natives had been converted, and the new town, which was called St. Thomé, became a centre of true Christian life in the midst of heathen depravity. It grew so rapidly that in a short time it became the chief emporium for the Portuguese trade on the Gulf of Bengal. The blessing of the Apostle was over that city, and when S Francis Xavier was leaving its shores, he looked back on it from the deck of the ship, and said to his companion John d'Eyra „I never visited a country where I found the people so good, or a town in which God was better served."

1) VIII Idus Maias Ex oppido S Thomae

When in 1887, we visited for the first time Mailepur, and again in 1891, the sanctuary of St Thomas, stood exactly as it did in the time of St Francis Xavier. A Church, the apse turned towards the sea, behind the Church, a few paces from the apse, a small chapel in the shape of a rotunda. In the middle of the pavement a double grave the upper one slightly larger, the lower one scarcely large enough to hold a corpse without a coffin. This was the tomb of the Apostle. A little further on, a modest presbytery on the sea shore. To-day, the tomb of St Thomas is in the middle of a beautiful Cathedral.

Not far from the sanctuary stands the little Mount Sinna Malé, where according to the tradition St Thomas was in the habit of withdrawing to pray. A narrow entrance in the rock leads to a low roofed cavern where he is said to have taken refuge when the Brahmins were looking for him in order to put him to death. A small church surmounts the hill.

Much farther away rises the great mount, Peria Malé, the place of the Apostle's martyrdom. It is a conical hill, rising from the plain, which can be seen from a great distance out at sea. The ascent is by an imposing stone stairway and on the top there is a beautiful church. The royal arms of Portugal are to be seen engraved above the

porch along with an inscription in Armenian characters. Over the high altar there is a stone slab on which is carved a cross. This is the cross which was reddened with the blood of St. Thomas, when he was pierced with lances, the famous cross of Mailepur.¹⁾

1) See Appendix IV

XI

THE RELICS

We have no certain evidence in regard to the date of the translation of the relics of the Apostle from Maalepur to Edessa

According to the acts, both Syriac and Latin, the translation would have taken place during the lifetime of the King who ordered his martyrdom. But the testimony of St Gregory of Tours has certainly a greater weight, and he says that the body of the Apostle was brought to Edessa many years after his martyrdom ¹⁾ What is certain is this, that the relics of the Apostle were already in Edessa in the time of St Ephrem who died in that town in 373

Some authors are of opinion that it was done after the conversion of the King of Edessa Abgar IX, when he declared the Catholic Faith to be the Religion of the state. This happened between 222 and 235

It was then that the merchant Khabin was sent to India and brought the body from Maalepur

¹⁾ In gloria mai. 222.

There is nothing strange in the fact, that the precious body of the Apostle was delivered to him, because, at that time the Christians of St. Thomas in India were placed under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Edessa. The priests came from there, and the monks, who were the guardians of the Apostle's tomb, were subjects to the Bishop of Edessa and, possibly, natives from that town.

Khabin took away the body, but left with the monks the lance-head, and the vase filled with the earth soaked with the Apostle's blood. This helped to identify his tomb

The relics of St Thomas remained at Edessa for nine centuries. Not until about the year 1144, when the towns which the Crusaders had conquered in Asia fell back into the hands of the Turks, were the relics removed to the island of Chios, in order to prevent them from falling into the hands of the infidels

They remained in Chios till 1258, when Leo Accaciuali brought them to Ortona, a small town on the Adriatic Coast of Italy, where they at present repose

VII THE LEGEND

The legend of St Thomas has been preserved in four small works all of very ancient date. These are *Acta S Thomae Apostoli*, of which two versions exist one in Syriac, the other in Greek. *Passio S Thomae Apostoli* in Latin. *Liber de miraculis S Thomae*, also in Latin and the *Thoma Parvam*, or *Carmen Thomae Rabban*, written in Malayalam, the vernacular of the Malabar Coast.

The antiquarians agree that the *Acta S Thomae* such as we possess them, were written about the beginning of the third century.

It is an unpalatable compilation in which the author endeavours to propagate strange doctrines about marriage.

It is evident that he made use of an older Legend, which he interpolated with his unwholesome doctrines, if we can say interpolated, because his additions increase nearly tenfold the original text.

It is not however difficult to distinguish this text,

from the additions made by the compiler of the third century. The primitive text is frankly catholic, simple, and full of piety and unction, whilst the additions, are in the style of the sermons of protestant parsons.

Moreover the original text shows an intimate knowledge of the customs and habits of the Indians, whilst the additions exhibit a gross ignorance of Indian ways and life.

These acts therefore when expurgated of all they contain of absurd and wicked are undoubtedly one of the oldest Christian legends in existence

The *Passio S. Thomae* is drawn partly from the *Acta*, but it gives many new facts, which shows that the author had access to other documents

The exact date of this work is unknown, but that it is of great antiquity is certain, because the author speaks of the large Christian communities which St Thomas left in Sind as still flourishing in his time. Now, the last mention we have of these communities, is of the beginning of the fourth century.

St. Gregory of Tours, in his work *In gloria Martyrum*, mentions the *Liber passionis S Thomae*.

The *Liber de miraculis S. Thomae*, likewise written

in Latin, has been attributed to St Gregory of Tours (538-593) on the ground of the similarity of style with the Book *De miraculis S. Andreae*, said to have been written by him. But it is not at all certain that the latter work is from the pen of St Gregory. In fact it is generally found in the appendix of his works, as being of an uncertain author and merely attributed to St Gregory.

The *Liber de miraculis* is little more than an expurgated version of the *Acta*, many of whose interpolations and needless prolixity it however retains. It contains besides passages copied word for word from the *Liber passionis*, and gives, on what authority is not known, a few new facts.

The *Thoma Parvam*, or *Carmen Thomae Rabban*, is said to be the work of Thoma Rabban (magister), the first disciple of St Thomas on the Malabar Coast, or of his nephew, the second Rabban of the house of *Maliyakal*. But this is undoubtedly attributing to it too ancient an origin, because its author draws upon the Book of the Acts.

The importance of this work lies in this, that, by giving the Legends of Malabar, it completes the three former works, which relate only the Legends of Sind and Malepur.

We know this work only from fragments, contained partly in a sixteenth century manuscript kept in the library of the Convent of Muthuoli, another manuscript at Palayur, and in a series of old hymns called wedding songs, formerly sung in the churches, and still used at marriage festivities.

The question has been raised whether the facts related in the four above mentioned books are purely fictitious, or to what extent they rest upon historical foundation. We would not attribute them more than a legendary authority. Nevertheless, we must not forget that the Legend differs from the fiction in so far, as the Legend is always based on a tradition, a fiction is a simple work of imagination.

It can certainly not be admitted that the facts related in the Legend are purely fictitious.

At the time when the Acta were written, the tradition of the Apostle was comparatively fresh. The Christian communities of St. Thomas in India were still flourishing and in constant communication with Mesopotamia. Barely a century and a half had elapsed since the martyrdom of the Apostle, and there were yet old people, whose grand-parents had known the Apostle.

Under such circumstances, no author would have

dared to concoct the whole story, and attempt to make it pass for genuine history

Moreover, the whole narrative, when expurgated of what was evidently interpolated, carries with it an atmosphere of truth, and has a way of attending to minute details, that could scarcely be invented

It must be admitted therefore that this beautiful Legend has certainly a historical foundation, and that the compilers collected the local traditions from the places which the Apostle had evangelised

And it is evident Until recent times, it was objected that the name of the King Gondophares, could not be Indian, and it was urged that no historian had ever spoken of a King of that name In fact, up to the middle of the nineteenth century, the name was to be found nowhere outside the Legend

Now we know that Gondophares really existed, that he ruled over the North west of India, and that he was a contemporary of St Thomas

Again the episode of the Jewish slave, whom the Apostle met a few days after his arrival to India¹ seems so well imagined to provide him with an interpreter And

¹ See the Legend. I. 4.

yet, the author of the *Periplus* sets down amongst the merchandise imported to India, Egyptian and Jewish slave girls, and he says that slave girls were included in the presents which the Roman merchants offered to the Raja of Barugaza (probably Baroda), and Strabo says the same. ¹⁾

Sylvain Levy was, as far as we know, the first author to point out the conformity between the descriptions in the Legend and the habits and customs of the Indians

The Rt. Rev. Bishop Medlycott gives several examples ²⁾ Sitapharna travels by bullock cart. ³⁾ Mygdonia is carried in a palanquin surrounded by servants ⁴⁾ Karish takes a bath before his meal and enters the presence of the King in sordid garments as a sign of sadness. ⁵⁾ Finally how they prostrate themselves on the ground before the Apostle

To the passages pointed out by the learned Prelate may be added

The blessing of the young married couple ⁶⁾ which is

1) *Analecta Bollandiana* Vol XVIII p 276

2) Pages 277—281

3) See Legend II

4) See Legend III

5) Legend III

6) Legend I 5

entirely in keeping with the Indian customs. Many times, we have been requested by Rajas and other persons of high rank to bless their children. The Indians, even the pagans make, and with reason, great account of the blessing, believing that it will bring health and happiness to their children.

The plan of the palace of Gondophares is also characteristic — „And he marked the place where silversmiths and the goldsmiths and the wood carvers should work, and he put in but few windows, which he intended to leave open and made them small, and there was to be a verandah round the whole building ‘—’ When the Indians require the services of the goldsmith, or silversmith, or the wood carver, they bring these workmen to their homes, and give them a room or a corner of the verandah in which to execute their orders.

In the North of India, where there are magnificent palaces, it is surprising to see how small the windows are, and into each is fixed a fretwork or grating artistically carved of a slab of white marble. Otherwise they are entirely open and no glass is used. This is rendered necessary by the climate. In a country where the

summers are exceedingly hot and the winters very cold, these small windows help to maintain in the rooms an even temperature, cool in summer and warmer in winter.

For the same reason in order that the sun may not overheat the walls or penetrate into the rooms, verandahs are still constructed all round the house.

Many other facts related in the Legend are in keeping with the Indian customs

Child-marriages, which are still practiced among the heathen ¹⁾

The disease called Elephantiasis, this terrible form of leprosy, unknown in the west, is of frequent occurrence in south of India ²⁾

The pretty story of the peacocks surrounding the Apostle whilst he prayed on the Little Mount, appears at first sight purely fictitious, ³⁾ nevertheless for one who knows India it has a flavour of reality. In the south of India, where the forests have been cleared the peacocks have disappeared, but in the North they are still abundant, and, as in several native states it is forbidden to kill them, they are nearly tame, and often in the evening, your

1) Legend I 5 and 16 III

2) Legend III

3) Legend III

garden is invaded by a troupe of these beautiful birds, who walk round you exhibiting their glorious plumage, but keeping always at a safe distance

But the most striking thing, which shows how the first writer of the legend if not an Indian himself knew at least perfectly the customs of India is the following fact

In speaking of ladies of rank, Indian etiquette forbids the use of their names they will say the mother of such a one, the wife, the daughter of such a one, but will never mention their names

Now throughout the whole legend of St Thomas, whilst the names of men are freely given the name of a woman never appears The queen, the princess, the noble lady, the aunt, the maid, all these expressions are used, but never the proper name

To one who has spent his life in India, the legend of St. Thomas possesses a local colour a particular Indian flavour, all happens in an Indian surrounding, so that every detail seems not only likely, but real and true One clearly understands that the legend has originated in India, and is based on local traditions

Some will perhaps object that there are too many

miracles But you see many miracles in the most genuine stories of the Apostles. At that time, when the doctrine of Christ was unknown to the heathens, God affirmed its truth with many supernatural facts. The Breviary tells us that it was through the sanctity of his life and of his doctrine, and through the many miracles he wrought, that St. Thomas converted the Indians, and the end of the early writer of the legend was to give a narrative of the miracles of the holy Apostle.

It now remains to say a few words about the names mentioned in the Legend

The name of Gondophares is a historical name. The Indian inscription on the coins of this King call him Gundaphara And once the early writer of the Legend has given correctly the name of the King, we suppose, that it can be admitted that the other names given in that part of the Legend Xanthippus, Gad and Habban or Abden are equally correct

It is much more difficult to identify the other names The old authors seem to have possessed a special talent of corrupting the Indian names when giving them a greek or latin sound, ,

Even more recent authors, those of the Portuguese period, corrupted the Indian names, even those of their contemporaries, to such a point, that it is impossible to guess what they were in reality

There is nothing astonishing in it. The Indian languages possess such sounds and intonations, which it is hopeless to attempt to reproduce in a European tongue

HAVING made up their mind to attach no importance whatever to the tradition, certain modern authors have endeavoured to identify King Mazdeus of the Legend with a certain Raja Visudeva who ruled in the North of India. But since this Visudeva lived one hundred and fifty years after St. Thomas, they finish up by concluding that the name of Mazdeus, as well as all the other names mentioned in that part of the Legend, are purely fictitious, an invention of the author

Tradition places the events narrated in this part of the Legend, not in the north of India, but in the south, on the Coromandel Coast. It is therefore in this part of India and in the language spoken there that the true meaning of the Indian names, to which old writers have endeavoured to give a Syriac or a Greek form must be sought. Thus, it is easy to trace what these names were in reality

Mazdeus, with its variants of *Mazdai*, *Mizdeus*, *Misdaios* is a corruption of *Mahadevan*, a common name amongst the pagans of higher class on the Coromandel Coast.¹⁾

Vizan, (*Uzanes*, *Zuzanes*) means *Vizayan*, the Tamil equivalent for Victor.

Sitapharna (*Sitaphorus*, *Sinphorus*, *Sephorus*) is a corruption of *Sitaraman*, a name not very common, but still used on this coast.

Karish (*Charisius*) means *Krishna* one of the commonest names amongst the pagans of Southern India

As has been pointed out, the women of which mention is made in the Legend, are not called by their proper name, which would be against the Indian custom, but referred to by various titles by which they may be distinguished. Thus

Treptia (*Trepitia*, *Tertia*) means *Tirupatti*, the spouse of the god, literally The spouse of the sacred one, that is of the King. The pagans addressing the Raja or any other person of high rank, call him god Devan.

¹⁾ Mahadevan is the official title still given in this country to the chief of the caste of Marawars

Manashar, means *Manushar*, the Lady or Manashiri the great and noble Lady

Migdonia, is a corruption of *Magudani*, princess of royal blood, queen (magna domina)

Siuthice (to be pronounced Sintetshe) means *Sinna Atshi*, little mother, properly speaking aunt when there is reference to the younger sister of the mother

Narkia, from *Nari* (dative Nark) a girl, a servant, corresponds to the English word maid

All that now remains to be done is to reconstruct the Legend in its original form, divested of all the additions and interpolations that were added to it in the course of time, which we will endeavour to do in the second part of this book.

Part II

THE LEGEND

I
ST THOMAS
in Sindh

I

After the Ascension of our Blessed Lord when the Apostles had received the Holy Ghost, they divided among themselves the countries of the world, in order that each one of them might preach in the region which fell to him by lot ¹ and in the place to which the Lord sent him

And India fell by lot and division to Thomas And he was not willing to go, saying — „I have no strength enough for this, and I am a Hebrew how can I teach the Indians? “ —

And he preached to the Medes and the Persians, to the Hyreans and to the Bactrians, but he did not go to India.

And when he came back to Jerusalem, the Lord appeared to him in a vision of the night and said to

¹ Conf. Acta I 26.

him „Thomas, go now to India and bring to its people who live in darkness, the light of eternal life “

Thomas answered „Lord, send me wheresoever Thou wilt, but not to India.“

And Jesus said to him Fear not, Thomas, I will be there with thee, and My name will be glorified in thee. Thou wilt fight the good fight and wilt confess My name before all the nations and the tribes of India, and from there I will call thee to share with thy brethren the glory of My kingdom in Heaven, And thou wilt have to suffer much, in order to show to the Indians that I am their Lord and their Saviour.“

„Oh ! Lord, said Thomas, do not send thy servant to India the country is far away, full of hardships and the people are ignorant and cruel.“

And Jesus said „Go, Thomas, and I will be with thee.“

Thomas knelt before the Saviour „Thou art my Lord and my God, he said, Thy Holy will be done “

2

He rose, took leave of Peter and went to Caesarea, where he met Habban the merchant, whom Gundaphara

the king of the Indians had sent to Syria with a trading vessel ¹⁾

Habban was walking along the wharf, and seeing the Apostle he said — „What dost thou want of me, holy man? “ —

And Thomas answered — „Take me on thy ship to India “ —

And when they had gone on board the ship, they began to sail, because the breeze was steady

They stopped at Aden and at Sokotra, where they went ashore, and where Thomas converted a large number to the Faith of Jesus Christ

And for three months, they were sailing gently along, until they reached the coast of India and cast anchor in the harbour of Indrapatoam ²⁾

3

And when they had disembarked and were going and entering the city, they heard the sound of pipes and organs and much music.

And Thomas was asking saying — „What is the rejoicing that is in the city? “ —

¹⁾ According to the tradition of the Malabar Coast Habbe was a Jew

²⁾ Pando.

They said to him „Thee too have the gods brought that thou mayest be glad in this city for the Rajah has an only daughter, and he is giving her to a man, and this sound of rejoicing, is that of the wedding feast.“

4

The Rajah having been told, that Habban and the Apostle had arrived in the town, and taken lodgings in an inn, invited them to the marriage banquet

And when St Thomas entered the palace, a garland of flowers was put round his neck, and they gave him the seat at the head of the table, Habban being given a place lower down.

But the holy Apostle, did not eat of the dishes that were served before him, nor drank of the wine which had been brought from Syria, but from the bottom of his heart he invoked upon the guests the blessing of the Lord.

When the repast was over the Apostle arose, and recited a hymn in Hebrew,¹⁾ which nobody understood, except a Jewish slave girl, a flute player, who happened to be in the hall²⁾

5

When the guests had departed the Rajah said to

1) Confr Mark XIV 26

2) Acta Mir

Thomas — „I beseech thee, O' man of God come and bless my daughter, because she is my only child and to-day I am giving her away in marriage ' —

And he led the Apostle to the nuptial chamber, where the children having knelt before him, Thomas put his hands on their heads and said — , God of Abraham of Isaac and of Jacob, bless these two children, and put into their hearts the seed of eternal life, and whatever Thou knowest to be beneficial to them, do it for them May they always fulfil thy Holy will In the name of Christ their Redeemer, may they possess for ever the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and be conducted by Thy grace " —

And still holding his hands on their heads, he said to them — „Our Lord be with you —

And he left them and went away ')

6

Thomas and Habban left Indrapatnam and they sailed to Narankot ')

It was a large, important town where the great king Gundaphara was residing at that time

And Habban went to him, and said that he had brought from Syria a man of God whose wisdom was great

) Acta Mir. Persio.

) Helioforum now Hyderabad India.

The Maharajah Gundaphara desired to see Thomas and when he was brought into his presence, he said „Canst thou build me a palace?“

„I can“ Replied St. Thomas, but he was speaking of the heavenly palace, that he had come to India to build.¹⁾

7

Gundaphara took him, and went with him outside the gate of the city and said „What sort of palace canst thou build me here?“

And the Apostle taking a rod laid out the place of the foundations. He marked out the place, where the artificers of the royal palace should dwell, and the halls in which the weavers, the coiners in gold and the silversmiths should carry on their trade. He measured the house of the smiths and the house of the carvers in wood. And he designed the palace leaving but few window openings for light, and making them small, and a large portico all around

He measured thus upon the earth, whilst he knew that the Lord was laying the foundations of the palace in heaven

The Maharajah saw all this and rejoiced, he

1) Passio,

said — „Thou art a great architect, worthy to work for kings “ —

And he gave to the Apostle a large sum of money for the building of the palace, and left Narankot because affairs of state called him elsewhere ¹

8

And the holy Apostle, moved by the spirit of God went through the towns and villages of the kingdom. He preached everywhere the Gospel of the Lord, and distributed amongst the poor the money of the Maharajah, and cured the sick who were brought to him.

He converted a multitude of heathens, built churches and ordained priests, and, during the absence of Gundaphorus, established the Church in his kingdom on a solid foundation.

And he was saying — „The money of the king, shall be given to the King of the kings, and many souls will be saved “ —

And he did not cease to teach, and to relieve those who were afflicted, saying — „May the Lord give you rest, to whom alone is glory. For He is the nourisher of

1) Abd. Mir Fatah. Medlicott. p. 257

the orphans and the provider of the widows, and He ministers unto all those who are afflicted.“¹⁾

9

During this time, the Rajah of Indrapatnam was considering the words of the Apostle, and moved by the grace of God, he set out for Narankot with his two children, his young daughter and his son-in-law.

And when he reached that town and found out the Apostle, he said to him „Man of God, confirm us in the truth, so that nothing may be wanting to us in the knowledge of Christ.“

After having carefully instructed them, St. Thomas baptised them The Rajah took the name of Xanthippus, and his children were called Denis and Pelagia.²⁾

10

Rajah Xanthippus of Indrapatnam, left his palace and his kingdom and, having been ordained a deacon remained with Thomas, and became his constant companion.

Denis and Pelagia returned to their home, and preaching in their country the gospel of Christ, converted a large number of heathens.

1) Acta Mir Pass

2) The Jews at that epoch used to take Greek names Vid Lib Machab Mir, Pass

St Thomas sent them a priest to take care of that flourishing church

And many years afterwards, Denis was consecrated Bishop of Indrapatnam, and he gave the veil to his wife

And when he died, the new Rajah being a heathen, wished Pelagia to offer a sacrifice to the idols and, as she constantly refused, he ordered her to be beheaded And she was the first among the Indians to gain the crown of Martyrdom ¹

II

After an absence of two years, the Maharajah Gunda phara returned to Narakot, and believing that his palace was finished, he said to his friends — „Come with me, and let us see the palace which has been built by the Apostle “ —

But they replied — „He has built you no palace He went all through the country, giving your money to the poor, and preaching to the people a new religion, of which, till now nobody heard a word he promises them everlasting life, and says, that whoever believes in his God will live after death He drives out devils, cures the sick, and raises the dead to life And for all this he accepts no

1) Mr. Paul,

reward. It is evident therefore that he is a magician and is seducing the people And now, having thus spent all your money, he has come back to Narnankot.“ ”

12

Gundaphara, in great anger, exclaimed „Bring him to me.“ And when the Apostle was brought before him, he said „Show me the palace which thou hast built for me, or else thou diest “

„Gundaphara, Maharajah, answered the Apostle, thy palace is built, but thou wilt see it only in the next life, when admitted to enjoy eternal happiness in heaven.“

Gundaphara cried out „Thou hast come here to make fools of us.“ And he ordered the Apostle and Habban to be cast into prison.

Thomas went rejoicing, at having to suffer for Jesus Christ, and he said to the merchant „Fear not, put thy confidence in God, and freed from this world, thou shalt rejoice in everlasting life in heaven “

Meanwhile, the Maharajah was considering, to what death he should condemn St Thomas, and he took the

resolution, that he should be hurned alive after being flayed, with Habban his companion "

13

Now, whilst they were in prison Gad, the younger brother of the Maharajah died, and Gundaphara who had a great affection for him, was overwhelmed with grief, and he ordered that he should be given a splendid funeral

On the first hour of the fourth day when the funeral rites were performed with great pomp Gad rose up from the bier, and the attendants stood around stupified

And he said to those who were standing before him — „Call my brother —

And they sent word to the Maharajah — „Thy brother has come to life “ —

Gundaphara sprung up from his seat, and went to the house of his brother, and the people followed him

And when he was standing beside his brother's bed, he was astounded, and was unable to speak

Gad said to him — „I know, my brother, that if a man had asked thee for the half of thy kingdom, thou wouldst have given it for me And now I beg thee that thou wouldst sell me that at which thou hast laboured “ —

The Maharajah said to him „Tell me, what shall I sell thee?“

He said to him „Swear into me“ And he swore unto him that he would grant him whatever he asked of all that he had.

Gad said to him „Sell me the palace which thou hast in heaven.“

The Maharajah said to him „Who has given me a palace in heaven?“

Gad answered Oh! Maharajah, the man whom thou hast condemned to be flayed and burnt alive is a great servant of the Almighty God

When I died God's Angels carried me to heaven, where they showed me a palace, resplendent with gold and silver and all kinds of precious stones Emeralds and hyacints, and other white and blue, sparkled inside and outside from the polished walls.

This, they said is the palace which Thomas has built for thy brother, and he has rendered himself unworthy of it.

But Thomas has prayed for thee, and Jesus-Christ will restore thee to life, that thou givest back to thy brother the money which he grudges to the poor.“

And Gundaphara exclaimed. „Oh! God of Thomas, have pity on my ignorance,“

14

Gad hastened then to the prison and, loosening the chains from St Thomas said to him — „Oh ! Apostle of the Lord, I implore thee, forgive the wrong that my brother has done thee “ —

Thomas made on his forehead the sign of the cross and said — „The peace of the Lord be with thee, my son “ —)

15

As they were leaving the prison together they saw Gundaphara coming towards them who prostrating himself before the Apostle asked to be pardoned and said — „O ! man of God ! holy Apostle, pray thy Lord Jesus Christ to make me worthy to enter the palace thou hast built for me, and help me to become a true worshipper of the God thou preachest “ —

The Maharajah and Gad remained with the Apostle rejoicing and praising God And after having instructed them during seven days, St Thomas baptised them The Maharajah took the name of Peter, and Gad his younger brother was called Paul)

) Mr Pando.

*) Mr Pando, Carmon.

When the people heard this news, they gathered round the Apostle in such numbers, that there was no building in the town, large enough to hold them.

He took them outside the gate, at the foot of a hill which they called mount Ganjo ¹⁾ and taking apart from amongst them all that were afflicted with infirmities he raised his hands to heaven and prayed „O ! Jesus-Christ, our Lord and our God, thou who hast said, that whatsoever we ask in Thy Name shall be granted to us , in Thy Name I beseech the Omnipotent God, that all the blind who are here may be given the use of their eyes, that the deaf may hear, and all these sufferings and infirmities be cured, so that these people, with one accord may confess the one living, eternal and omnipotent God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, three persons but one God.“

As soon as Thomas had finished this prayer, and the Christians present had answered „Amen“ there came a loud peal of thunder, and the assembled multitude fell prostrate on the ground, and there was a great silence.

„Arise, said the Apostle, the Lord has come

1) Gazi

down to us, and cured all your infirmities. Thank and praise Him, my children " —

And the people rose up giving glory to God

St Thomas then preached to them, and, on the next Sunday, after having instructed them, he baptised nine thousand men, and many women and children ')

17

When he was going once out of the town St Thomas met a woman possessed by the devil, who threw her down on the ground, and with wild cries exclaimed — „Why dost thou persecute us, Apostle of Christ. Thou hast come to drive us from this country, which we hold in our power " —

Thomas said to the devil — „In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I command thee, go out of this woman, without hurting her body in any way " —

And the devil left her and he said — „Thou hast ordered me to leave this woman, but I will find another of nobler birth, and I will possess her " —

The woman rose and Thomas laid his hand upon her head and he said — „May the grace of God be upon thee for ever " —

But she threw herself at his feet and asked for baptism. And Thomas blessed a spring and baptised her along with many others.¹⁾

18

And the Apostle ordered his deacon to make ready for the Holy Mass.

And he brought a table, and spread over it a linen cloth, and he brought and placed upon it the bread and the wine And Thomas offered the divine sacrifice

And when he was giving Communion to the faithful, a youth approached to the table, and stretched both his hands in which Thomas deposed the Blessed Sacrament ²⁾

The youth received the Host, and both his arms were paralysed and he could not lift his hands to his mouth

And when Thomas saw that he said „The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus-Christ gives health to every one, and thou boy, what hast thou done for these things have not befallen thee without cause ? “

Then the youth burst into tears and trembling in his whole body said aloud before the congregation „The day before yesterday, I went home in the evening, and

1) Acta Mir

2) It was at that time the practice for the priest to place the Host in the hands of the faithful, who then communicated themselves

found that my wife was unfaithful to me The man fled and I killed her And now she is there lying dead " —

Thomas took him aside, and the boy made his confession with great sorrow and contrition

The Apostle then took a vessel full of water, blessed it and said to the boy — „Plunge thy arms into this water " —

And when the youth did so, his arms became as they had been before

Then Thomas said — „Come and let us go to the inn where thou didst the deed —

And he was going before the Apostle and a great multitude were coming after them

And when they came to the inn they went into it and found the girl dead When Thomas saw her he was grieved for her, because she was a child, and he said — „Take her up, and bring her into the midst of the room " —

They did so and placed her on a couch Thomas placed both his hands on the corpse and began to pray — „O! my Lord Jesus Christ, Thou who hearest our humble prayers, raise this dead child to life in order that all these people may glorify Thy name, believe in Thee and arise to eternal life " —

Then he said to the youth ,, Lift up thy heart to God.“

And he said ,, Go, take her by the hand, and say to her I with my hand slew thee, but our Lord Jesus-Christ, seeing my Faith raiseth thee from the dead.“ And he made on his forehead the sign of the Cross.

The youth went, and stood over her and said ,, In truth, my Lord Jesus, I have believed in thee “

And he looked upon Thomas and said ,, Pray for me, Apostle of the Lord.“

And as soon as he took hold of her hand, and said to her what the Apostle had ordered him to say, the girl stood up, and looked around on the great crowd who were standing by. And when she saw the Apostle she fell prostrate at his feet.

Thomas made over them the sign of the Cross and said ,, My children, God has been good unto you, go, and do not sin any more “

And the people believed in Jesus-Christ, and many were baptised They brought offerings to Thomas, who distributed them in alms to the poor.¹⁾

19

And Thomas never ceased to preach and to speak to the people and to show them that Jesus was the Messiah of whom the Scriptures spoke

And the report of him was heard among men in the cities and in the villages and every man who had a sick person, or one possessed by a spirit, or a lunatic or paralytic brought them to him. Some they brought with their beds and placed them by the roadside withersoever they knew that he was going, and he was healing them all by the power of Jesus, by the holy sign of the Cross

And the sick who were healed and the paralytics who could now walk were all glorifying God and singing His praises

Thomas conquered for Christ an innumerable people. The Maharajah Peter Gundaphara was building churches, and the holy Apostle was instructing the people, ordaining priests and deacons, thus establishing on solid foundations the church of Sindh

He entrusted it to the care of Paul Gad, the Maharajah's brother, whom he consecrated Bishop in Narankot, then he went forth to go whither our Lord had commanded him to go¹

¹ Acta. Mir. Pando. Canon.

II

ST. THOMAS

On the Malabar Coast

I

The holy Apostle St. Thomas came to the Malabar Coast with the deacon Xanthippus, the former Rajah of Indrapatnam

They came by sea, and landed at Cranganur also called Malankara, a large important town, which was yearly visited by many Roman vessels from Syria and from Egypt.

Habban, the merchant came also with them, but he did not remain. He loaded his ship with choice merchandise, and sailed back to Indrapatnam and thence to Narankot

St Thomas and his deacon Xanthippus, took up their lodgings in the Jewish quarter, in the house of the head-man of that community, the Rabbi Paul.

They were received with honour, for the Jews of Cranganur had heard of Jesus of Nazareth, and of the miracles which His Apostle had wrought in Sindh.¹⁾

1) Carmen

2

And on the next day of Sabbath, Thomas went to the Synagogue with Rabbi Paul and, rising up from his seat, he opened the book of the Propheets, and began to explain, that Jesus was the Messiah, whom God had promised to their fathers Adam, Abraham and David And they listened to him in silence "

3

A few days after, Thomas, walking in the streets of the town, met a young Brahmin His name was Maliyakal his native place was Niranam

The youth greeted respectfully the stranger and they went on together

And Thomas said — „My son, where art thou coming from? “ —

The boy replied — „I return from the temple, where I went to offer to the gods my morning prayers “ —

— „Dost thou think, said Thomas, that the gods hear thy prayers? “ —

— „How could they hear me, Maliyakal replied, they are graven from a block of stone, and their appearance is so horrid “ —

Then Thomas said „Young man, why dost thou worship them?“

The boy replied „My father goes to the temple, my grand-father went there before him, how can I act differently from them? It is the custom of the country. And if I did not go every morning, my mother would give me no food And you must know that the gods are malicious, and if we would not worship them, they would send us famine and plague and every imaginable evil.“

Then Thomas spoke to him of God, and the youth listened to his words, and when they had to part the holy Apostle, made on his forehead the sign of the Cross, and said „The grace of our Lord always rest upon thee.“

Henceforth the boy came often to Thomas, and sitting on a mat at his feet, he listened eagerly when the Apostle spoke of God, of Jesus, and of His Mother Mary

And when he was sufficiently instructed, he baptised him, and called him Thomas.

And when his father knew he was baptised, he drove him out from his house And Thomas said „My child, henceforth Jesus will be thy father, and thou wilt remain with me“

Thomas Maliyakal, was the first disciple of the holy

Apostle on the Malabar Coast. Later on he was ordained priest, and preached the Gospel to his brethren and he was known in Malabar as Thomas Rabban.¹

4

And every Sabbath day St Thomas went to the Synagogue and explained to the Jews the meaning of the Scriptures, and many of them believed.

Rabbi Paul asked for baptism and Thomas baptised him with all his family, and others followed the Rabbi's example.

And the Jews who remained obdurate, gave to the Christians the name of Nazarani.²

5

But the heathens were not becoming Christians. They were afraid of their Rajah Kerala Perumal who was strongly attached to the idols.

The Brahmins were persecuting the holy Apostle for having baptised the boy Mahiyakal.

And one day, whilst Thomas was praying, a Brahmin who was passing gave him a cruel blow.

¹ Doctor teacher R. bbl

² Carmen. (Note W. understand under the name of Carmen, not only what still remains of the ms. script of Thomas's hymns but all the hymns, hymns and wedding songs which are but fragments of that sacred work)

St Thomas looked at him and said sorrowfully
 „O! man what hast thou done. Thou wilt soon lose the
 hand that has struck me “

And he said „O! God Almighty! pardon him.
 Bless him and save his soul “

A few days later, a mad dog bit the Brahmin, and
 tore badly the hand which had struck the holy Apostle.

St Thomas hearing of that, hastened to the Brahmin,
 and entering the house found that the hand had been
 amputated. He said „If thou invokest the Name of
 Jesus-Christ, He can restore to thee thy hand. “

The Brahmin said „Yes, I believe in thy God,
 who is the only living God, all-powerful and immortal.
 Pray to Him to forgive me.“

Then the Apostle took the cut off hand and applying it
 to the arm he prayed „O! my Lord Jesus! glorify thy
 Name, so that these people believe, that thou art their Lord
 and their God “

He made the sign of the Cross on the hand and it
 remained attached to the arm, healed and full of life,
 showing not even a sign of the scar ¹⁾

1) The Carmelite Father Vincent of St Catherine who visited Malabar in 1570 relates
 this legend as being very old. At the present day, it is one of the best known amongst the
 Christians of the coast

6

And when they related the fact to Keralā Perumal the Rajā of Cranganur, he summoned Thomās to his palace

And he treated him with great honour, and touched by his sanctity and his doctrine, he gave him leave to preach the Gospel in every part of his kingdom, and also money to build churches

And the Apostle built seven churches The first at Cranganur, the second at Quilon, the third at Chiryal, the fourth at Niranam, the fifth at Kokamanganam the sixth at Kottakavi Parur, the seventh at Palayur

These were all Brahmin towns and all the principal inhabitants were Brahmins¹

7

Thomās was of slight build, his face was pale His hair was long and his dress very simple

Affable towards those who approached him, he was modest, humble and prudent, and drew all hearts to him

During the day, he preached and instructed the people, and passed in prayer a portion of the night On Sundays he offered to God the holy Sacrifice of the Mass and distributed Communion to the faithful

¹ Canons.

The people loved him, and called him Muthappen which means grandfather ¹⁾

They crowded to hear him, and followed him wherever he went, for he worked great miracles he drove out devils from those possessed, he gave sight to the blind, cured lepers, and even raised the dead to life.²⁾

8

The Rajah of Cranganur, Kerala-Perumal, was now daily discoursing with Thomas, and the words of the Apostle made a deep impression on his soul

At last he asked to be baptised, and the holy Apostle baptised him with all his family

The Rajah was called Andrew and his son-in-law took the name of Peter.

After that, St Thomas baptised four hundred people, amongst whom were thirty two families of Brahmins and Namburies.

Thenceforth Cranganur became a Christian town and they called it Mahadieverpatnam, the city of the great God.³⁾

1) Up to the present time the Catholics of Malabar call St Thomas Muthappen

2) Carmen

3) Carmen,

9

The Brahmins were much concerned at seeing their temples emptied and their Rajah a Christian and endeavoured to put Thomas to death.

One day when the holy Apostle was going unattended to visit a neighbouring village, they threw themselves on him, and throwing stones on him they left him on the roadside for dead.

He was found there senseless by a Christian, who calling his son, carried him to his house, where he recovered from his wounds.¹

10

The fame of the wonders which the Apostle was working on the Malabar Coast spread all over Southern India and reached Ceylon.

And the Rajah of Jaffna Peria Perumal set out to meet him at Quilon.

And he said — „Apostle of the Redeemer! I am one of the wise men, who saw in the east the star of the Messiah, and followed it to Bethlehem, and adored there the child of the promise. Give me the Baptism of eternal life“ —

¹) Canonen.

And Thomas said „May the peace of the Lord be always with thee “

He baptised him, and called him Gaspard. And he preached the Gospel of the Lord, and was put to death for his faith.¹⁾

11

Thomas went to Palayur. When he approached the town, he saw the quarter of the Brahmins, above which rose the gopurams of the temple, with gilded tops glittering in the sun, the whole surrounded with a high wall.

To the south he saw the Jewish quarter, with their beautiful Synagogue. The Chettys, who had also their temple lived in the northern part of the city, and the Sudras in the eastern.

Thomas took his abode in the Jewish quarter, and every Sabbath taught in the Synagogue, and many were converted.²⁾

12

Then, in July, on the day of the new moon, he went to the Brahmin quarter.

He was passing by a pond which was sacred to the

1) Old legend

2) Carmen

heathens and many Brahmins were bathing. They took water in their hands and threw it into the air.

Thomas said — „Why are you throwing the water, up into the air in that manner? “ —

And the Brahmins replied — „We are offering it to the gods.“ —

Thomas said — „Do not the gods reject your offering? See, the waters fall back into the pond “ —

The Brahmins said — „Such is the nature of the water, it was made so that it falls always down “ —

Then the holy Apostle replied — „My God has made the earth and the water, and all nature obeys His command “ —

He took some water in his hand and threw it into the air. And the drops remained suspended, shining like so many gems, then fell at Thomas' feet in a shower of beautiful flowers, whose fragrance filled the whole place.

Many Brahmins left the water and, resuming their cloths, they followed the Apostle, who instructed and baptised them.

13

Thomas remained at Palayur, where he baptised so

many heathens, that they pulled down their temples except the largest, on which they put the Cross, and made it unto a Church

And the Brahmins who remained attached to their idols left the place, cursing it and swearing that they would never eat nor drink in that town again, and from that time they called it not Palayur but Chavkattu, the cursed city.

The Apostle left in Palayur two of his early disciples, Sankapuri and Pakatomattam whom he had ordained priests, and he himself set out for Parur.¹⁾

14

He reached Parur on the very day of the great feast of the temple. A procession was going through the streets, with an idol which was being carried on the back of a large elephant preceded by drummers and pipers.

As soon as Thomas approached, several in the procession recognised him and began to cry out „Look ! here is the magician who corrupted the people of Palayur “

And they crowded round him brandishing sticks and throwing stones at him

1) Carmen This is one of the most popular legends even amongst the heathens And to this day, the Brahmins, who visit the place, abstain there from food or drink

The Apostle invoked the Lord, and suddenly the sky darkened and thunder came from the clouds

And the lightning struck the idol and killed the elephant and the men who walked around And the multitude stood in terror

And Thomas said — „O men ' abandon your empty idols, which are but stone and brass, and worship God alone, who has manifested before you His power —

And they answered — O ' Thomas Multihappen pray thy God to spare us ' —

And the Apostle said — God does not wish your death He who gives eternal life Bring me some water “ —

And when water was brought to him he blessed it and pouring it on the bodies he said — In the name of God Almighty, Father Son and Holy Ghost come back to life, in order to show to these people, that there is only one God Creator of heaven and earth and Sovereign Lord of life and death “ —

He made the sign of the Cross over the corpses, and they all rose in the sight of the astonished crowd

No one thought of gathering the fragments of the idol, they all followed the Apostle, who led them outside the town, where he preached to them the Gospel of the Lord

And after having been baptised, they placed the Cross on their temple and made it into a church.¹⁾

15

The Brahmins seeing themselves thus deserted, the people becoming Christians, sought to take revenge on Thomas.

When the Apostle, was at Niranam, a heathen girl gave birth to a child and, at the instigation of the Brahmins, both she and her father accused St Thomas and sued him in a court of law.

Thomas said to the Judge „Let them produce the child.“

And when the new born infant was brought, he made the sign of the Cross on his lips and said „Little child tell us who is thy father ?“

And the child, in a strong voice exclaimed „Such-a-one is my father“

And the man named, who was amongst those present, confessed his guilt.²⁾

16

Then Thomas went to Maleatur. The heathens there

1) Carmen

2) Carmen

were obstinate they mocked and insulted him and none of them became a Christian

The Apostle felt discouraged and, according to his custom he retired to the mountain to pray

He made a Cross on the rock, and spent a part of the night invoking the name of Jesus. He said — „O' Lord I give me these souls I“ — At length worn out he fell at the foot of the rock

And he saw in a dream the Blessed Virgin Mary, who called him — „Thomas why art thou so sad? —

And Thomas said — Blessed Mother of God! The people there, are so hard hearted They worship idols of stone, and refuse to believe in thy Divine Son Jesus“ —

And Mary answered — Thomas! Go, preach to them Jesus will put such words into thy mouth, that they will be unable to resist“ —

Thomas went down to Mleatur, and when he spoke of God to the crowd, they listened in silence and all of them were baptised ”

17

Thus the Church of Malabar was established

The Rajah of Cranganur Andrew Kerala Perumal was

building churches, and his son-in-law Peter, the deacon Xanthippus who had been Rajah of Indrapatnam, the young Brahmin Thoma Rabban Maliyakal, Sankapuri, Pakatomattam, Kadapur Rabban, and other disciples of St Thomas, were preaching everywhere the Gospel of the Lord

And the holy Apostle returned to Cranganur ¹⁾

18

Whilst he was staying in that town, Sitaraman ²⁾ who was the Commander of the troops of Mahadevan ³⁾ Rajah of Mailepuram, came to him and said „O! Muthappen! Apostle of Christ, thou who art the great healer of bodies and souls, take pity on my sorrow For I have a wife and a daughter, and both are possessed by the devil, who torments them horribly. Come with me to Mailepuram, for I am confident that, in the name of thy God, thou canst set them free.“

And Thomas said „If thou believest, thy wife and thy daughter will be cured.“

And Sitaraman „O! Apostle of the Lord, if I did not believe, would I have come from so far to find thee.“ ⁴⁾

1) Carmen

2) Sitapharna

3) Mazdeus

4) Mir Carmen

And the Apostle understood that Christ was calling him elsewhere

He called his deacon Anthippus who had been Rajah of the first town in India, where he had landed, and said to him — „Bring together all the Christians ‘ —

And when they were all assembled Thomas said — „My children, now I must leave you, for the Lord calls me far away, to establish there His Church Stand always firm in your Faith, guard carefully the doctrine which I have taught you, and love with all your heart our Lord Jesus Christ Anthippus will take my place amongst you, for you will see me no more here on earth —

And lifting up his hands to heaven, he blessed them and he said — , O I Lord, be thou Thyself the guardian of these people, whom, through me Thou hast called into Thy fold Let none of them look behind, let none return to the worship of idols So that all protected by Thy all powerful hand might deserve eternal life, and the felicity in heaven prepared for them by Christ our Lord, to whom be all honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Ghost.“ —

And when the people had answered — „Amen “ — St. Thomas placed his hand on the head of each one

saying „May the peace of Our Lord be always with thee.“

Having then embraced his disciples he set out for his long journey.

And the people followed him sobbing, and they said „Muthappen, O ! Thomas Muthappen remember us before God ! “

And mounting with Sitaraman into a cart drawn by two white bullocks he started for Mailepuram.

Peter Rabban and Thoma Rabban went with them for seven miles, and took leave of the Apostle, who blessed them again

The people remained disconsolate and they wept, because St. Thomas had said to them, that they would never see him again on earth.¹⁾

1) Acta. Mir Carmen

III

MAILEPURAM

I

After a fatiguing journey, the Apostle and his companion arrived at Mailepuram which was also called Kalamunur

As they came near to the house of Sitaraman, the devil began to torment horribly his wife and his daughter

And when St Thomas entered their room, the devil began to howl — „Why dost thou persecute us, Thomas, Apostle of Jesus Thou hast already driven us out of another province of India, and now there is no place for us in this country, of which, for so long a time, we have been the Masters, in which we could hide from thee!“ —

Then St. Thomas understood, that it was the same devil, that he had driven out of the woman at Narankot, and he said — „In the Name of Jesus Christ whose servant I am, go out of these creatures of God, and withdraw into some desert place, where thou wouldst be unable to do harm to men“ —

The devil left the two women, and they remained like dead stretched on their mats on the ground.

Thomas took them by the hand and told them to rise, then, asking to bring some rice he bade them to eat, and they ate.

The Apostle took then his abode in the house of Sitaraman, and the people came to him. He restored health to many sick people, and preached the Gospel of the Lord and baptised many heathens ¹⁾

2

Now it happened that a large block of a very valuable timber, came to be stranded on the beach

The Rajah Mahadevan, wishing to make use of it for some carved work in his palace, sent for an elephant and a body of coolies to fetch it.

But the block of wood was so heavy, that they could not succeed in moving it from its place.

St. Thomas said to Mahadevan „Rajah ¹ give me this block of wood, and allow me to use it for building a church in the place whither I will bring it “ .

The Rajah answered laughing „If thou thinkest

1) Mir,

thyself stronger than the elephant and the coolies, take it and do as thou pleasest " —

— „I am old and feeble, replied the Apostle, but thou shalt see the power of God whom I adore '

And loosening his girdle, he gave it to one of the coolies and said — „Tie it to the tree " —

And when the man had done so „Take now the other end of the girdle, and walk before me dragging the heavy log " — And he made upon it the sign of the Cross

And the cooly, without effort pulled the log out of the water and dragged it to Kalamunur

The Rajah was amazed He did great honor to St Thomas and allowed him to build the Church

And the holy Apostle returned to the house of Sitaraman, and a great multitude followed him ")

3

While the Apostle was preaching at Mailepur, news reached him of the death of the Bishop Xanthippus the former Rajah of Indrapatnam, to whom he had entrusted the government of the Church of Malabar

St Thomas called to Mailepuram Peter Rabban, the

) Barrore. Asia. Vol. V p. 106. Vol VI p. 231 This legend already popular in the XIV century is still one of the most popular in India. See Appendix X.

son-in-law of the Rajah of Cranganur Andrew Kerala Peroumal, and consecrated him Bishop, to rule over the Christians of the Malabar Coast.¹⁾

4

A rich lady of the town, whom her relations called Sinna-Achchi²⁾ had been blind for six years

Having heard of the Apostle, she went to him. St Thomas blessed her, touched her eyes with his hand, and her sight was restored.

She went to see her niece Magudani³⁾ and when the latter looked at her, and saw no trace of the infirmity, but her aunt's eyes clear and limpid, she exclaimed „Sinna-Achchi, he must be a god, who has restored your sight, without using any medicine. “

Sinna-Achchi answered „Is it only to myself. O! to how many men, and to how many women and children, has he not restored their health, by invoking over them the name of Jesus-Christ.“

Magudani said to her „Could I go and see him.“

„To-morrow, said Sinna-Achchi, he will preach to

1) Carmen

2) Sinthice

3) Mygdonia,

the people, change thy clothes, cover thy face with a veil, and take thy place among the women " —

Magudani, was the wife of Krishna 's brother in law of Mahadevan the Rajah."

5

Next morning Magudani ordered her palanquin, and her servants were carrying her to Sitaraman's house. And they could not bring her to the door on account of the crowd which filled the streets. And her servants beat them with sticks to open the way for their mistress.

But the Apostle stopped them and said — „Do not prevent to come to me those who wish to hear the word of God, and cease to molest the poor and the lowly " —

Magudani, hearing these words came out of her palanquin, and falling on the ground at the feet of Thomas, said to him — „O! Apostle of the Lord, have patience with us, for we are an ignorant people, and often do wrong unwillingly " —

St Thomas raised her up and said — „My daughter, the peace of Our Lord be with thee. Do not rely upon thy rank and thy riches, for they are things that pass away. Seek rather the riches of eternal life " —

) Kariah Chertakov
) Pando.

And he continued to instruct the people, speaking to them of God their Creator, whom alone they should adore, and of the nothingness of their idols

And when the sun was setting he dismissed the people, and calling to him Krishna's wife, and making on her brow the sign of the Cross, he said „Go in peace, and may Our Lord make thee worthy of becoming his servant Go, Jesus will take care of thee “

And when she returned to her house, Magudani shut herself up in her room, and wept, addressing fervent prayers to God.¹⁾

6

Now Krishna the kinsman of Mahadevan the Rajah, had taken his bath and gone to supper. And he was asking for his wife, where she was, seeing that she had not come to meet him from her chamber And her maidens said to him „She is not inclined “

Krishna then went to her room and said to her „Why art thou sad to-day and sorrowful? “

She said to him „I am very tired.“

He said to her „Why didst thou not pay proper respect, to thy position as a lady of high caste, and stay at

1) Mir Passio Acta,

home, instead of going to listen to vain words, and see deeds of witchcraft? Get up and come, for I cannot take my meal without thee " —

Magudani answered — „Excuse me, I am much agitated " —

And Krishna said to her — „On thy account I excused myself to my Lord the Rajah, from taking my meal with him, and thou dost not choose to come and sup with me ? " —

Magudani said to him — „Excuse me, I am not inclined " —)

7

And when it was morning, Krishna the kinsman of the Rajah arose early, and dressed, and washed his hands, and went to present his respects to the Rajah

But his wife Magudani arose early too and went to see the Apostle whom she found preaching to a great crowd

And he asked — „My children, the woman who yesterday confessed our Lord with all her heart and soul, whose wife is she ? " —

Sitaraman said to him

„She is the wife of Krishna the kinsman of the Rajah Mahadevan, and her husband is a cruel man, and all he biddeth, the Rajah does, and honours him much And he will not let her continue as she has promised, because he is much attached to her, and always says to the Rajah that there is no other woman like her in the world And she too loves him much And all these things which thou sayest are new and strange to him “

St Thomas said „If Our Lord has given her His grace, and she has received the seed of Faith, she will neither make account of this life nor be afraid of death.“

When Magudani heard these words, she fell on the ground at the Apostle's feet, and said „Of a truth, Swami, since I heard thy preaching, I keep all thy words engraved in my heart. Through thee I received the seed of Faith, and through thy prayer it will grow, and render me worthy of Our Lord Jesus-Christ “

Thomas blessed her and began again to preach to the crowd And Magudani was listening, her soul got inflamed with love of Jesus-Christ, and she was strengthened in her Faith And at sunset she went home.¹⁾

8

Krishna returned at the hour of dinner, and did not find his wife at home. He asked the servants — „Whither is your mistress gone?“ —

And one of them said to him — „She is gone to the strange man, and she is there“ —

Krishna got angry with the servants, because they had not informed him sooner. And he went and bathed, and came back whilst it was still light and was sitting and waiting for Magdani, till she should come.

And when it was evening, she came and he met her and said to her — „Where hast thou been till now?“ —

And she said to him — „I went to the physician's house“ —

He said — „That strange conjurer, thou callest him a physician?“ —

She said to him — „Yea, he is a great physician, for the others heal the bodies, which shall be dissolved, he heals not only the bodies but the souls, which shall never be dissolved“ —

And when Krishna, the kinsman of the Rajah, heard these things, he was angry in his mind with his wife, and with the holy Apostle, but he said nothing to her, because

he was afraid of her, for she was far superior to him in wealth and also in understanding

And he said again to her „Oh! my sister and lady, and beloved wife, Magudani, be not led astray by idle and foolish words, nor by deeds of witchcraft, which I have heard the magician does in the name of his God.“

And when Krishna was speaking, she remained silent in prayer, and she was asking herself when she could see again the Apostle of Jesus-Christ.

Krishna left her and went and took his meal alone in a sorrowful mood ¹⁾

9

On the following morning, Krishna rose from his couch with his heart filled with bitterness. He put on a sordid dress, and went to see the Rajah.

When Mahadevan saw him, he said „Krishna, what has happened, and why did you come here in these vile garments?“

Krishna gave him an account of what has happened to his wife Magudani, and the Rajah said to him „Let not these things trouble thee I will summon the wizard and punish him.“

Then Krishna, whose sister was the wife of the Rajah said to him — „I implore thee, Rajah, to permit the Rani, to come and see Magudani. She will perhaps be able to shake off this folly from her head “ —

— „Good, said Mahadevan, tell thy sister to go and see thy wife, her visit will do her good “ —

10

The Rajah then ordered to call Sitaraman

And when the soldiers entered his house, they found him seated with the Apostle and Magudani at his side, listening to the word of God

One of them said — , Sitaraman, what art thou doing. The Rajah is hot against thee, and is asking for thy head, and thou listenest here to the talk of a wizard. Come, the Rajah expects thee “ —

Hearing these words, Sitaraman said to Thomas — „Swami pray for me “ —

And Thomas said — „Fear not, and place thy trust in God. He is our protector and without His will, no mortal can hurt thee ‘

) Mir Acta. Paolo.

) Acta. Mir

11

And when he entered the presence of the Rajah, Mahadevan asked him

„Who is the magician whom thou keepest in thy house, who creates trouble in my kingdom and seduces the people?“

„Oh! Rajah, answered Sitaraman, thou knowest well who he is. My wife and my daughter were possessed by the devil. And I heard of him, how God granted him every thing he asked for. And I went to him, and asked him to come with me. And he came, and healed my wife and my daughter.“¹⁾

12

Then the Rajah sent soldiers, to bring the Apostle

And when they entered Sitaraman's house, they found him sitting and teaching a great many of people, and Magudani was there

And they were afraid when they saw the great crowd, and they returned and said to the Rajah „We did not dare to say aught to him, for the crowd, they said, was great and Magudani too was there.“

And Krishna rose from his seat and said — „Rajah, give me a few men, I will go and fetch him and Magudani, whose senses he has taken away “ —

And he came to the house of Sitaraman, and found Thomas, but he did not find Magudani, for she had gone home

And he said to the Apostle — Come with me wretched wizard, and we shall see of what avail thy magic will be to thee “ —

He passed a cord round his neck and dragged him to the palace, saying — „Let thy Christ save thee now from my hands “ —)

13

When the Rajah saw Thomas he said to him — „From what country art thou and of what nation, and in the name of what God dost thou work all these wonders “ —

Thomas replied — „My God is also thy God, Oh ! Rajah, he is the Creator of heaven and earth and He alone must be adored It is wrong to worship idols “ —

The Rajah ordered to load him with chains and to send him to prison

And when the doors of the prison were closed, Thomas gave thanks to God that he had been found worthy to suffer for Christ.

And when he had gone and entered the prison, Mahadevan and Krishna were planning how they might kill him, for the people were much attached to him. Many of them he had baptised, and the heathens looked on him as a God, and they said „He is a great and powerful magician.“¹⁾

14

And Krishna the husband of Magudani went to his house rejoicing greatly, because he thought in his mind, that henceforth his wife will become the same as she was before she heard the words of the Apostle and believed in Jesus-Christ.

And when he entered her apartments he found her sitting on the ground, and her looks were downcast.

He said to her „My Lady and beloved wife, Magudani, what is this wicked folly that had taken possession of thee Dismiss from thy mind the thought of the wizard, for now he is in prison, and thou wilt see him no more “

And when Magudani had heard these things from Krishna she was more sorely afflicted

And Krishna was angry and grieved, and he lay down to sleep

And Magudani, prostrating herself on the floor offered her life to God¹⁾

15

While she was praying, her old nurse came to her room, and seeing her mistress in tears, said to her — „What perverse thoughts have entered thy heart, my daughter, thou hast lost all thy former guety²⁾ —

— „Oh! Nari,³⁾ said Magudani, it is not perversity, but truth, that man should know God his Creator God grant that thou too wouldst know our Lord Jesus and come to share our great sorrow, for Christ's Apostle has been cast into prison “ —

Nari answered — , If I see that it is the truth, I will believe with thee

Then Magudani spoke to her of the Faith, and Nari the nurse believed in Jesus Christ³⁾

16

Magudani took twenty coins of silver, and, without

1) Acta. Mir

2) Narika.

3) Mir

any one seeing it she went to the prison, to give the money to the goalers, that they might let her in and allow to see the holy Apostle.

And as she was going, Thomas met her in the street. And she saw him, and was afraid and fled

And he stopped her and said „Be not afraid, Magudani, our Lord Jesus-Christ will not forsake thee, for His mercy is great “

Magudani was looking at him, and said „Whither was thou going, Swami, and who let thee out of prison? “

Thomas said to her „Our Lord Jesus opened the doors and lulled the goalers to sleep.“

And when they entered the house of Krishna, Magudani said to him „Oh ! Apostle of the Lord, pour on my head the Water of Baptism, and allow me to partake the Eucharistic Bread

And Thomas answered „Be it as thou desirest “ 1)

17

And Magudani awoke her old nurse and said „My mother and nurse, Nari, thou hast loved me since my childhood, do me a favour which will last for ever “

And Nari answered — „What wantest thou my daughter, Magudani and what comfort canst thou have? —

She said to her — Fetch secretly for me a loaf of bread, and bring me some wine and some water —

And Nari said — „I will fetch thee bread in plenty and many flagons of wine —

Magudani replied — „Many flagons are of no use bring me some wine in a cup and one whole loaf —

And when Nari had brought them St Thomas fetched a basin of water blessed it and baptised Magudani in the Name of the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost

Then he said the holy Mass and let Magudani partake the holy Eucharist the consecrated bread and the cup of the Lord

And Nari too begged the Apostle that she also might receive baptism and Thomas gave it to her

Thomas then blessed the women, and putting his hand on their head, he said — „May the grace of God be always with you ‘ —

And he returned to the prison, and found the doors open and the goitlers asleep, and the doors closed by themselves behind him ”

And when Krishna had heard, that Thomas had entered his house, he went and told it to the Rajah.

Mahadevan said to him „Let us fetch the magician and have him put to death.“

But Krishna answered „Have patience with him for a while, and bring him out of prison, and speak to him, and frighten him. Perhaps then he will go and persuade Magudani to return to the worship of our gods.“

The Rajah ordered to fetch the Apostle.

And all the prisoners were grieved, because Thomas had departed, and they were looking for him and said „They have taken away from us, our only consolation.“ 1)

The Rajah said to Thomas „Why teachest thou a doctrine which gods and men abhor, and in which there is nothing pleasing “

And Thomas said to him „Do I teach anything that is bad ? “

The Rajah said „I let thee loose, go and persuade Magudani the wife of my kinsman Krishna to return

to her old ways. For I have heard, that wizards can with contrary incantations dissolve their charms, and remove the spell they have cast. And know that if thou dost not persuade her, I will have thee put to death, and life is dear to all men " —

St Thomas answered — „This life passes away, but the life which I teach, never passes away —

And he went to the house of Sitaraman, and took there again his abode "

20

Sitaraman said to Thomas — „Swami I beseech thee with my wife and my daughter that we may receive baptism from thy hand, and become true servants of Christ, and be reckoned among the number of His flock and His sheep ' —

And Thomas having given them a last instruction, baptised them. Then he brought bread and wine and said the holy Mass, and gave holy Communion to Sitaraman, to his wife and his daughter

And henceforward, Sitaraman bore the name of Paul)

) Acta.

) Acta. Caribæa.

And when he had dismissed Thomas, Rajah Mahadevan went to his house for his evening meal, and he was telling Thirupathi¹⁾ the Rani, what had happened to her brother Krishna, who had left his presence with a sad countenance. And he said „Thirupathi, my wife, take with thee our son Vizayan²⁾ and go and see Magudani the wife of thy brother Krishna, and try to make her forget her folly.“

And the Rani and her son the youth Vizayan, went to see Magudani.

The Rani said to her „My sister and dearest friend, abandon these vain thoughts, for the Rajah is afflicted, and his whole court is sad, and in the town they speak only of thee. What strange doctrine does this magician teach thee.“

And the youth Vizayan said „He preaches a new, strange God, but who has made heaven and earth but our great gods?“

Magudani looked at the youth and smiled, then turning to Thirupathi she said O! my beloved sister, if thou knewest what he has taught me, thou wouldst think

1) Treptia

2) Vizan

he is a god. Our kinswoman Sinna Achchi was blind, and he gave her back the sight. He cures the sick, calls back to life the dead, and he shows that there is eternal life in heaven, so different from our short life on earth. And lest thou sayest that it is not possible the only son of Sitaraman, the commander of thy husband's troops, died in the night, and he went to the prison and prevailed on the guards to let the holy Apostle go with him on parole, and brought him to his house, and the holy man prayed, took the child by the hand and, the boy who was dead is now alive and full of health.

And now that the Rajah set him at liberty, he instructs all who come to him, and relieves those who suffer " —

The Rani said — „If what thou sayest is true, let us go and see him " —

22

And when they reached the house of Sitaraman, they saw a man afflicted with elephantiasis and all covered with leprosy. He asked to see the Apostle, but so horrid was his aspect, that they did not allow him to come in.

Thirupathy and Magudani entered the house, but could not speak to Thomas, who was surrounded by a

crowd of sick people, whom he restored to health, imposing his hands on them and signing them with the Cross

The Rani stupefied exclaimed „Accursed by God are those who do not believe in the works of salvation.“

Magudani said to Thomas „Swami a leper is waiting at the door, and is not allowed to enter “

Thomas said to Paul Sitarman „Do not suffer those who believe and seek eternal salvation to be prevented from coming to me.“

When the leper was brought in, the Apostle was moved, so horrid was his aspect, and laying his hand on the man's head he prayed „Oh ! God, who through thy Son Jesus-Christ hast given us the power to restore sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, to cure lepers, to expel the devils from those who are possessed, and to raise the dead to life, send one of Thy holy Angels to cure this man, in order that all these people know, that Thou art God, and that there is no other god but Thou, and that, by this manifestation of thy omnipotence, they be induced to adore Thee, their God and Creator, and their Saviour Jesus-Christ, who lives and reigns for all eternity, with Thee and the Holy Ghost. Amen.“

He had hardly pronounced these words, when a youth resplendent with light appeared in the midst of the crowd Taking the leper by the hand, he led him aside, and touching his sores with his hand, he brought him cured to the Apostle and disappeared

And Thomas baptised the man, and had him dressed in a new white cloth And the people glorified God saying — „Of a truth, an Angel of God has come down to day among us “ —)

23

Seeing that, Thirupathi the Rani fell on the ground at the feet of Thomas and said — „Apostle of the one true God, admit me to eternal life “ —

And Thomas said — „The treasure of the King of Heaven remains always open, and those who believe in him can draw from it abundantly And if thou believest, thou wilt be worthy to be admitted to His Sacraments “ —

The Rani said I believe that there is no other God besides thine, allow me to become His servant “ —

And the Apostle laid his hand on her head and blessed her)

) *Foot.*2) *Foot.*

After remaining silent for a moment St. Thomas said „I hear the voice of Jesus-Christ calling me. And it tells me that my end is approaching. Receive therefore the Water of Baptism and the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

And he told them to serve God faithfully, to love the Church, to have much respect for the priests and to assemble on every Sunday to assist at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and to hear the word of God.

He then baptised all the catechumens and gave them Confirmation. And they all returned to their homes full of happiness ¹⁾

And when Thirupathi went home, she found the Rajah expecting her, and he had not yet dined. He said to her „Why didst thou remain with Magudani from morning till evening? “

The Rani answered „I thought that Magudani had become mad, but on the contrary she has acquired the only and true wisdom, and she has opened to me the gates of eternal life. I have seen the Apostle of God, the one who shows the way of salvation. Oh! my husband,

Mahadevan, thou too art mortal, and thy kingdom is only for a time Go, and listen to him, and he will show to thee the way of everlasting glory " —

And the Rajah beside himself shut the Rani in a dark room beneath the banqueting hall of the palace — ¹

26

The Rajah was seized with terror He sent for Krishna and began to abuse him He said — „I wished to save your wife, and I have lost mine " —

Krishna asked — What has happened? —

The Rajah said — „He has bewitched the Rani " — ²

27

And he gave order to seize the Apostle, and his own son Vizayan and to put them in prison

Krishna brought Magudani to the palace and the old nurse Nani, and had them both shut up in the prison of the Rani

And the young Vizayan, whom the grace of God had transformed, began to think, what he could do, to save the holy Apostle from the hands of his father ³

¹) *Pam. Mlr*

²) *Pam.*

³) *Act.*

The Raja said „Bring me here the sorcerer.“

And Thomas was brought loaded with heavy chains, and Vizayan stood by his side.

The Rajah said to the Apostle „Who is thy God, who takes away our wives from us? I had allowed Thirupathi to go and see Magudani, that she might save her from thy hands, and thou hast drawn her into the same abyss, speak the truth, else I will have thee put to death.“

St Thomas answered „God is eternal, and those who transgress His Law, will suffer eternal punishment. Thou, O¹ Rajah canst kill the body, but thou canst not put to death the soul, and God can condemn to everlasting fire the body and the soul “¹⁾

And when Thomas had said these words, the Rajah beside himself with anger, gave order to heat two plates of iron, and make him stand barefooted upon them

And they brought the plates glowing like fire, and placing them on the ground in the palace courtyard laid hold of Thomas, to make him step upon them.

And suddenly water rose out of the earth, and the burning plates were immersed, and the men let Thomas go, and fled

And when he saw that the courtyard was flooded, and the water rising higher, the Rajah said to Thomas — „Pray thy God, and he will deliver us from this death by the flood, and we shall not die thus “ —

And Thomas said — „O! my beloved Lord Jesus, I pray thee, bind this element and confine it in its right place Do Thou make this flood cease, and save these men from death, for there are some of these who are standing by, who shall believe in Thee and be saved “ —

And when Thomas was praying, all around remained silent, and slowly the waters disappeared, being swallowed up in the earth

And Thomas said — „O Rajah! it is not on my account that God has wrought this miracle, for he would have given me the strength to stand the torture of the fire without the water extinguishing it God has made it for thee, that thou mayest know His power, believe in Him and worship Him “ — ’

Krishna said to the Rajah „If thou dost not put the magician to death, he will drag us also into the abyss “

The Rajah said „Let a great fire be lighted, and the magician thrown into it.“

„Not so, said Krishna, for by his magical art, he will again cause a fountain to spring up, which will extinguish the flames But make him sacrifice to the goddess Kali. He will thus excite the anger of his God, who will abandon him “

„Of a truth, answered Thomas, if I sacrifice to your gods, God, whom I adore, will withdraw from me His grace “

The Rajah said „Well, let him sacrifice to Kali ¹⁾

And the Apostle was taken to the temple, preceded by dancers and drums, and they sprinkled him with perfumes.

And when they had entered the temple, Thomas said to the idol „Hear me thou, devil, who dwellest

1) Mir Pass

in this idol, and givest oracles to these deluded people who see the idol but who cannot see thee I adjure thee by the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, get out of that idol, and stand before me, and obey my commands " —

And the devil left the idol, and stood before the Apostle, who alone could see him, the devil remaining invisible to others And he said — „I beseech thee, Apostle of Christ, cast me not into hell but permit me to kill all these men, who hitherto have worshipped me." —

And Thomas said — „In the Name of Jesus Christ thy Master, I command thee, thou shalt hurt no one, and when I tell thee to do so, thou shalt thyself destroy that idol " —

As the Apostle spoke in Hebrew, no one understood what he said nor to whom he spoke

The Rajah turned to him — „Dost thou dare, he said, to speak here in my presence Adore the idol else thou wilt die " —

And Thomas answered — „I adore, but not the idol I adore, but not vile metal I adore, but not thy false gods I adore Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose Name, I command thee, O! demon, to destroy this idol, without causing hurt to any man " —

Scarcely had he pronounced these words, when the idol got liquefied and melted as wax before the fire.

The Rajah and Krishna fled. The Brahmins threw themselves upon Thomas and there was a great tumult, but the majority of the people took the side of Thomas, and delivered him from the hands of those who wanted to kill him ¹⁾

32

The Brahmins now consulted an oracle, asking what they should do to get rid of Thomas

And the devil answered them „I want a human sacrifice Let the blood of a child, pure and of high lineage, be shed at the foot of the idol “

And the Guru of the Rajah immolated his own son and spilt his blood around the idol, and he ran to the Rajah and accused Thomas of having killed the child

The Rajah summoned the Apostle and said to him „Hearest thou of what thou art accused, what hast thou to say in thy defence? “

Thomas replied „Let the body of the dead child be brought “

And when the body was brought the Apostle took it

1) Mir

by the hand and said — „In the Name of God thy Creator, chuld, arise, and say who has killed thee “ —

The boy arose full of life and said — „My father has killed me “ —

The Rajah was afraid, and he said — „Let the magician be taken to prison, and I shall see what shall be done with him “ — “

33

And the Apostle was taken to prison, and the crowd followed him, and the young prince Vizayan the son of Mahadevan the Rajah, and Paul Sitaraman, the commander of the Rajah's troops, were walking by his side. And they entered the prison, and sat down at the feet of Thomas, that they might hear the word of God, for they knew that the Rajah would put him to death.

And the Apostle in his prison did not cease to teach the faithful .

34

One day, when a large number of Christians having bribed the goalers, had been admitted to the holy Apostle, Thomas said to them — „Believe firmly in God whom I

1) Barrow, Asia. Vol. 4. p. 23. Vieille legende.

2) Acta. Mir.

preach, and in Jesus-Christ whom I have announced to you. He is the protector of those who serve him truly, and the consoler of those who suffer. My soul worships him with joy, because my time is approaching and I desire to be with him."

And then lifting his eyes to heaven he said „My Lord, and my God and my hope Thy will be done Be thou with me until the end. I have planted Thy vine in this land, may it cast strong roots and find a fertile soil, and may its tendrils twine upwards, and produce fruits in abundance. Render this people worthy of Thee, and may those whom I have acquired for Thee, be Thy delight O! Christ. I have fulfilled Thy will and accomplished Thy commandments Let me receive the crown of victory." 1)

35

When Vizayan, the young son of the Rajah, had heard these words, and he knew that the time of Thomas was approaching, he said „I beg thee, Swami, Apostle of Christ, give me also holy Baptism, that I become a servant of God For today I have completed my twenty first year, and it is seven years since I am married to my wife

1) Acta Mir

Manushiar" and I have no children for she is an infirm woman and her members are paralysed. If she could move from her bed and had seen thee and heard thee speak, she too would be here at thy feet, and she would gain eternal life. Allow me to speak to the goalers on my word they will let thee out. Come with me to my house, and visit the poor woman, and if thou givest her not health here on earth, show her the way to everlasting life " —

— , My son, said the Apostle, if thou believest, thou shalt see the wonders of God, how he gives life and has compassion upon his servants ' — '

36

And whilst they were speaking Thirupathiy the Rani, Magudam and Nari, were standing at the door of the prison, and they bribed the goalers giving them 360 pieces of silver that they let them in to Thomas

And when they entered, they found Vizayam Paul Sitaraman, his wife and his daughter and all the prisoners sitting and listening to Thomas "

) Manacher

) Acta. Mir

3) Acta.

And Thomas said to them „Who let you out of the room in which the Rajah kept you imprisoned, and who opened you the gates of this prison ? “

The Rani answered „Didst thou not let us out of our prison room and say to us Come to my prison, and the Lord will show you his glory. And thou didst go with us, but when we reached the gate thou didst disappear, and we heard the sound of the door which was shut in our faces. But we gave money to the goalers, and they let us in, and we stand here, before thee, and beg thee that thou wouldst do what we ask from thee, that we might let thee escape and hide thee until the wrath of the Rajah subsides.“

Thomas said to the Rani „Tell me first how you were shut up.“

The Rani said „Thou asketh me how we were shut up, when thou wast all the time with us, and didst leave us but only for an hour ? How couldst thou ignore how I was shut up ? But if thou wishest to hear it, then listen The Rajah sent for me and he said That conjuror has not yet got power over thee, because I have heard that he bewitches with water and oil, and with

bread and wine, and he has not yet bewitched thee. But harken unto me then, and hear what I say unto thee, that I will not torture thee until thou diest, for I know, that as long as he has not given thee water and oil and bread and wine, he has not yet got full power over thee.

And I said to him: Whatever thou wilt do to me, over my body thou hast power, but my soul, I will not loose it for thee.

And when he had heard my words, he shut me up in a dark room beneath his dining hall. And his kinsman, my brother Krishnar, brought both Magudam and Narai, and shut them up with me.

But our hearts were full of gladness, and light did not depart from us, for, Swami, thou wert with us, and thou thyself didst bring us out, and now we stand here before thee " —

Thomas remained a while silent and then he said: —
„To Thee be glory O I Jesus " —

38

And whilst they were still speaking, the goalers came to put out the lights, for they said: — „These lights may

betray your presence, and the Rajah will be told, that we allowed you all to come to the magician."

And they went out, leaving them in darkness And Thomas said „O ' Lord give us light, for these sons of darkness have plunged us into obscurity. Pour down on thy humble servants Thy everlasting light, which none can carry away, and none can extinguish."

And as he said these words, light as of day lit up the cell, and while they sang the glories of God, the goalers were all sleeping.¹⁾

39

Thomas said to Vizayan „Go home, and prepare in thy house all that is necessary for celebrating the holy Sacrifice

Vizayan answered „How could I get out of the prison the night is dark, the gates are shut and the goalers asleep."

„Go, answered Thomas, thou wilt find the door open."

Vizayan started, the others followed him, and Thomas remained alone in his prison.²⁾

1) Acta Mir

2) Mir

40

When Vizayan was half way home, he met in the street his young wife Manushiar, and seeing him she exclaimed — „Ol Vizayan, my husband “ —

And Vizayan, astonished said — „Manushiar¹ where art thou going, and how canst thou walk, thou who couldst not get up from thy bed? “ —

Manushiar said — „God has sent me this good youth, who, placing his hand upon my brow cured me, and told me to go to the holy Apostle, and I am going there “ —

— „Where is the youth whom God sent to thee, my beloved, let me go and thank him, for he has cured thee, and now thou walkest “ — Answered Vizayan

— „Why? Dost thou not see him, said to him Manushiar, he is here, holding me by the hand, and helping me to walk, for I am still very weak “ — ¹

41

And as they were speaking, Thomas came towards them And Paul Sitaraman, his wife and his daughter, Thirupathy the Rani, Magudani and Nari were coming after him

When Manushiar saw the Apostle, she fell on the ground at his feet, and said O' Swami! Thy kindness did not suffer thee to permit that I should become weary, but thou thyself art coming to me."

Then looking round she said „The Angel of the Lord has gone, how can I walk?"

And Thomas said „Fear not, my daughter, Jesus will support thee."

And she ran to her house, to be there the first to receive the Apostle.¹⁾

42

And when they entered into the house, Thomas, raising his eyes to heaven began to pray „O' Lord, he said, Thou art the support of the weak, the hope of the unfortunate, the refuge of those who suffer. We adore Thee, and glorify Thy name. Protect Thy humble servants Vizayan, Manushiar and Thirupathy, that, once admitted into Thy fold, they be reckoned in the number of the elect That, living in the midst of all these idolaters, they do not fall back into error, but remain always constant in their Faith." -

And he baptised first Vizayan who took the name of

1) Mir,

John, then Thirupathy the Rani and Manushiar And after he had baptised them, he gave them holy Communion

Then he said — „My children, listen to my last words, for my stay among you will be short My earthly life touches its close, and Christ, whom I have served faithfully, is calling me to Him You have seen many marvels wrought by God through the hands of His humble servant, but take care that your Faith waver not, when you shall see me delivered into the hands of men, and led to death For I must accomplish the Will of God, and I have no other will than His “ —

Then he blessed them and returned to his prison

And the women went back to the dark room, beneath the banqueting hall of the Rajah, and they wept knowing that Mahadevan would put the Apostle to death ¹⁾

43

The goalers went to the Rajah and said — „O! Rajah, Mahadevan, save us from the magician, and confine him to some other prison For by his magical art and his wicked incantations, he opens all the doors, and goes and comes just as he pleases. We shut the doors, and

1) Mr. Carmon.

find them open. And he makes any one come in The Rani, Magudani and others."

The Rajah called the Devan and said „Dost thou hear what they are saying."

- „It cannot be, said the Devan, for when I heard all about it, I placed my seal, on the door of the magician's cell, and next day I found it left untouched."

The Rajah said to the goalers „You are a pack of liars."

But they knew that what they said was true.¹⁾

44

The Rajah Mahadevan entered the Durbar hall, and took his seat on the throne.

And when the Apostle had been brought before him, he said to him „Why hast thou come to India ?

Thomas replied „I have come to India for the salvation of many, and to bring the Indians the knowledge of the true God."

The Rajah said „Who is thy God ? "

„My God, said Thomas, is thy God, the Maker of heaven and earth."²⁾

1) Mir

2) Mir

45

The Rajah, having decided the Apostle's death, hesitated what orders to give, because he was afraid of the great multitude, of whom many believed in the Lord, even among his nobles

He decided therefore to take him away from the crowd

He went out of the Durbar hall and told Thomas to follow him, and they went out of the town, with the Rajah's bodyguard, and the people were thinking that Mahadevan wanted to hear the doctrine of Thomas, and that the Apostle would expose it to him

After having walked for about half a league, when the crowd had dispersed, he handed Thomas to an officer and said to him — „Take now four soldiers, bring the magician to the top of the mountain, and pierce him there with lances“ —

And young John Vizayan and Paul Sitaraman walked by the side of Thomas, who spoke to them of the glories of God¹

46

And when they were on the top of the mountain,

¹ Acta Mir

Thomas said to Vizayan „Give some money to the soldiers, that they leave us a little time.“

Vizayan bribed the soldiers and spoke to the officer - „O! Kumar, said the latter, I hate this business and will wait till evening.“

Then taking them both aside Thomas said holy Mass for the last time in his earthly life, and consecrated Bishop Paul Sitaraman, and made deacon the young prince Vizayan. And they passed the whole day in prayer.¹⁾

47

And when the evening had come, Thomas walked to the soldiers and said to them „Now do what you have been ordered to do.“

He knelt down before a stone on which a Cross had been carved, and offered his life to God

The soldiers pierced him with their lances, and the stone with the Cross carved on it was bathed with his blood.

The holy Apostle fell on the ground, but he was not yet dead.

Bishop Paul Sitaraman gently drew out the iron of

1) Mir Carmen

the knee, and a bleeding wound was opened in his side, at the same place as that of Jesus Christ, which the Apostle had touched with his hand

The deacon John Vizayan, seeing that Thomas breathed, said to the Bishop — , Let us bring him to my house, and apply some medicine “ —

But Thomas said — „Remedies will be useless. Christ is calling me to him “ —

And the people, having heard of what had happened, went in a great crowd to the mountain, and with a dying voice, the Apostle of Jesus Christ exhorted them to be faithful to God, and constant in their Faith And the blood from his wound was running on the earth

He remained there till morning when he gave up his holy soul to God “

48

Bishop Paul Sitaraman and the deacon John Vizayan gathered into an urn the earth that had been moistened with the Apostle's blood, all the Christians of the town, had come to the mount, and weeping and chanting hymns, they bore to the church the remains of Thomas and buried him there And Bishop Paul Sitaraman placed in the

grave, besides the body of the holy Apostle, the earthen urn, with the earth soaked with the blood that flew out of his wound.

And many miracles were wrought at his tomb, many possessed were delivered, and a multitude of sick people were cured.

And the soldier, whose lance had given the deathblow, asked for baptism, and took the name of Antinodorus.¹⁾

49

Bishop Paul Sitaraman and the deacon John Vizayan, who had loved Thomas with true filial love, were praying day and night at his tomb. They remained there constantly.

Thomas appeared to them and said „Why do you tarry here My body is in this tomb, but my soul is with God in whom I have placed all my trust Arise, go and instruct the people and, in a short time you will also be with me.“ -

The deacon John Vizayan said to him — „O! Apostle of the Lord, without thee, what will become of this fold of the Lord? Who will teach them the way of salvation?“

1) Mir Pass Carmen Marignolli

Thomas replied — "Have confidence my son
 God will send you many trials, the flock will be dispersed
 But when the sea which beats on the coast will reach the
 wall of the church I have built, there will come men from
 the west, who will solidly and for ever establish in India
 the kingdom of Christ " — "

50

Whilst Bishop Peter of Malabar, the brother of the
 Rajah Andrew of Cranganur was celebrating the holy Mass
 an Angel appeared to him, and said — Thomas the
 Apostle of Jesus, has received his crown in heaven —

And after the mass was finished he called Thomas
 Rabban, who was the Bramin boy converted by
 St Thomas, and Kadapur Rabban whom the Apostle had
 ordained priest, and they started together for Mallepuram
 And many Christians set out with them

And they prayed for ten days on the tomb of Thomas
 On the tenth day Thomas appeared to them sur-
 rounded by a heavenly light and, in sweet words, exhorted
 them to love Jesus Christ, and to persevere in their Faith

1) Mr Pass. Barros, V II p. 107 and Vol. VI, p. 230. When the Port guese first disem-
 barked in India and brought Catholic Missionaries, the sea was not more than a stone throw
 from the ruins of the church of Mallepuram

And he said „Those who will remember my death, and visit my tomb, will merit the grace of the Lord.“

After that, he blessed them, and the heavenly vision disappeared.

And they returned to Malabar, and their hearts were full of gladness.¹⁾

51

Rajah Mahadevan and his Kinsman Krishna persecuted their wives Thirupathy and Magudani. But they remained strong in their Faith, and nothing could separate them from Christ.

Once, when they were much afflicted, Thomas appeared to them. And he said „My daughters, put your trust in God, for the hour is nigh when His name will be glorified and your sadness will change into joy.“

And Mahadevan and Krishna, wearied by the constancy of their wives, left them in peace.²⁾

52

Now it happened, that the son of the Rajah fell ill. No remedies could cure him and the boy was dying. And since Vizayan his eldest son had become a Christian, the

1) Carmen

2) Mir

Rajah considered the boy as his only child, and the heir to his kingdom.

Mahadevan was much afflicted, at last he said — „I will go and open the grave of the Apostle, and I will take one of his bones and hang it on the neck of the boy, and he will live “ —

And when he was on his way, St Thomas appeared to him and said — „Thou didst not believe in the living and now thou believest in the death, but fear nothing, my son, Jesus Christ will have pity on thee and thou wilt see how great is His mercy “ —

The Rajah, disturbed in his soul by the vision, went to his son, the deacon Vizayan and said to him — „Give me a relic of the holy Apostle, and thy brother will not die “ —

Vizayan called the Bishop Paul Sitaraman, they opened the tomb of Thomas and gave the Rajah some of the earth soaked in the blood of the Martyr)

53

The Rajah Mahadevan returned to the palace, threw himself on his knees at the bed of the child, and with a

humble and repentant heart, he exclaimed „O Christ, I believe in Thee and I worship Thee “

And he hung round the neck of his dying child a satchel containing the earth, and the boy rose full of health and strength.

Rajah Mahadevan fell prone on the ground and said „My brothers, pray Our Lord Jesus-Christ to have pity on me, and pardon me the death of the Apostle.“

Bishop Paul baptised him and gave him the name of Siluway¹⁾ which means The holy Cross. And the Christians, full of joy, glorified the Lord.“²⁾

54

And the Christians of the town were increasing in number, and flourishing communities sprung up all around, and the grace of God was lavished upon them

Bishop Paul Sitaraman celebrated holy Mass and gave holy Communion. The deacon John Vizayan, the son of the Rajah, served him at the Altar and took care of the poor, the widows and the orphans.

1) A Common name among the Catholic Tamils

2) Mir Acta Carmen

God was with them, and the number of Christians increased every day ¹⁾

) Mir Acta.

APPENDIX

I

Extracts from the Apostolic Brief
Humanæ salutis Auctor
of the 1st September 1886
by which His Holiness Pope Leo XIII
established the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy in India

The Auctor of the salvation of man, Our Lord Jesus Christ, having redeemed us with His blood from slavery, and being on the eve of his return to heaven and to His Father, addressing those whom He had constituted His Apostles, disciples of His own training, and witnesses of all that He had done and taught, He entrusted to them the world, to imbue it with his doctrine

It was in the gracious design of God, that all mankind should be saved nor could this be without the light of truth being placed before them

Wherefore, mindful of their most noble calling, and fortified by the Holy Ghost, they boldly set forth to various parts of the world, to carry to all the nations the wisdom of the Gospel, reaching even farther in their progress than

the conquerors of nations had hitherto penetrated, so that, from the very beginning of the Church, that most true saying has obtained „Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their voice into the ends of the whole world.“

It has been the constant tradition of the Church, that the duty of undertaking the discharge of the Apostolic office in the vast regions of India fell to the lot of St. Thomas.

He indeed it was, as ancient literary monuments testify, who, after Christ's Ascension into Heaven, after having travelled to Æthiopia, Persia, Hyrcania, and finally to the peninsula beyond the Indus, by a most difficult route, attended with most serious hardships, first enlightened those nations with the light of Christian truth. And having paid to the chief Pastor of souls the tribute of his blood, was called away to his everlasting reward in Heaven.

From that time forwards, India never altogether ceased to revere the Apostle who had deserved so well of that country. In the most ancient books of liturgical prayers, as well as in other monuments of these ancient Churches, the name and praises of Thomas were wont to

be celebrated, and even in the lapse of ages, after a lamentable propagation of errors, his memory was no ways defaced

As soon however as the Portuguese possessions grew in extent, new dioceses were erected in the recently acquired territories. Among others stands out in bold relief that of Goa, which was raised by Paul IV to the dignity of an Archiepiscopal See. Next in rank comes that of Cochín and Cranganore, followed by another, on the Coromandel Coast founded by Paul V in Meliapore, the city of St Thomas.

Wherefore, having, as the gravity of the matter requires, consulted the votes of Our venerable Brothers the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church presiding over the Council for the propagation of the Faith, having in the humility of Our heart poured forth prayers to the God of all power, having besought the help of the Immaculate Mother of God, of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, of St Thomas the Apostle, and St Francis Xavier who, as in times gone by, they had led these nations into the light of the Gospel, so now watch over and shield them with their intercession in Heaven.

II

AN ANCIENT HYMN

The following hymn has been published by the Bollandist Fathers in their *Analecta* Vol. VI. p 403. They reproduce it without any indication of its origin and date

It is certainly very ancient, not older however than the end of the ninth century, and the verses which we give in the footnote have been interpolated probably in the last decades of the thirteenth century or later.

This Hymn gives a resumé of the legend such as it has been made known in Europe by the Anglo-Saxon Monk Aelfric.

DE S. THOMA

APOSTOLO

Sancte Thoma princeps mundi
Fac me, quaeso, non confundi
Ob culparum gravitatem.
Fac me tuam dignitatem
Digne semper exaltare
Et devote invocare,

Christum tantum dilexisti,
Mori secum quod cupisti
Dicens Et nos gradiamur
Et cum illo moriamur
Exquiris nec prius scitam
Viam, veritatem, vitam

Non credendo Christi muris
Veram, vitam, experiris
Tangendo humanitatem,
Es confessus Deitatem
Unde nobis fortitudo
Crescit et beatitudo

Veritatem sic expertus,
Hinc fis Christi testis certus
Magnus mundo praedicator
Trium regum baptisator

Commendaris Christi ore
Te fidelem servum fore
Nam quod lucro acquisisti
Totum Christo attulisti

Contemplator O ! coelestis
 Tu in nuptiarum festis,
 Semper coelum intuendo,
 Nil edendo vel bibendo

Tuae carnis es afflictor,
 Castitatis benedictor
 Et ex donis thesaurorum
 Pius pater egenorum.

Es palatii fundator
 Fratris regis suscitator.
 Ipsum regem sic repente
 Acquis cum sua gente.

Omnes aegros sic sanando
 Transis unde praedicando.
 Lanceis post perforaris
 Et sic martyr coronaris.¹⁾

1) The three strophes which had evidently been interpolated in this place are as follows

*Errorum tu es contemptor
 Perfidorum tu peremptor
 Nam nunquam in civitate
 Qua jaces in veritate
 Vivit quis haereticorum
 Judeorum, paganorum*

O mi princeps tam præclare
 Preelecte mihi care
 Quamvis sim peccator totus
 Tibi tamen sim devotus
 Te honoro teque amo
 Te requiro, at te clamo

Firma me in castitate
 Fide, spe et caritate,
 Fac me Deo sic servire
 Ne contingat me perire

Duc per viam veritatis
 Me ad vitam claritatis,
 Statim cum amittam flamen
 Deus verus det hoc. Amen —

*Dignis cum quibus Christi
 Sacrum latum tetigisti
 Sacramentum præbes dignis
 Desuperando hoc indignis.*

*Ex hoc fit in manifesto
 Omni anno tuo festo
 Vere signum tale tuum
 Nunquam fit per quemquam Sanctum*

iii

THE JEWS OF MALABAR

The legend mentions the Jews of Malabar. Organized Hebrew communities have certainly existed in India at that epoch. Although, as we have seen below, in the first century of the Christian era, about 120 Roman ships visited yearly the coasts of India, they did not come as now periodically one by one, weekly or monthly. They sailed in fleets, and had to choose as well in going outwards as for their home voyage the seasons when the wind was propitious.

They had therefore in India their own establishments, a kind of commercial houses which they called Emporia, in which they collected the goods, and kept them ready for shipping, at the propitious season.

As the trade between India and Rome was chiefly in the hands of Syrian merchants, these emporiums were kept by commercial agents, who were mostly Syrians and Jews from Alexandria and who formed a permanent colony in the harbours of India with which their ships were trading.

And there is nothing strange therefore in the fact, that the Apostle St Thomas, visited, and took his abode in such places where there were colonies of his own countrymen

Such organized colonies of Jews, still exist on the Malabar Coast "

After Cranganur had ceased to exist, and Palayur, once an important town had dwindled down to the state of a mere large village, the Jews, crossed over to the neighbouring towns of Cochin and Ernakulam, where they live, as of yore, in their separate quarters

They are divided in two sections or castes, the white and the black Jews, and do not intermingle with one another

Their origin is not known The Rabbi of the white Jews of Cochin told me, that in their records, they have no documents more ancient than the fifteenth century

Their Synagogue is one of the places of interest in the town, being richly decorated, the walls hung with costly silks They have a Pentateuch of great antiquity, written on a large roll of parchment

1) According to the Census of 19 there are 2297 The largest Jewish community in India is now that of Bombay 206

The black Jews seem to be the descendants of the ancient settlers. They are generally petty traders, and are often darker than the low-caste Indians. One would suppose them to be Indians converted to Judaism in the distant past, if they had not retained a marked Hebrew type, like that one can see in Russia and in northern Austria.

IV

THE SONG OF THOMA RABBAN

The following very ancient narrative, formerly sung in the churches, relates the apostolic journeys of St Thomas along the Malabar Coast

It has been sent to me along with other documents by the Right Rev A Kandathil, Bishop of Arad, and is taken from an ancient manuscript preserved in an old family of Palayur. Other copies are kept at Niranam and at Parur

It is evidently a fragment or rather a resumé of the Carmen Thomae Rabban

— „May the Holy Trinity assist me to sing the glories of the Apostle St Thomas

May Jesus Christ our Saviour pour down upon us all the blessings, that He once lavished on this land, by the hands of His Apostle Thomas

May the Holy Mother of God, whom St Thomas taught us to know and to love, protect us

I proceed to sing of the manner in which our holy Religion has been introduced into Malabar.

The Apostle St. Thomas landed at Maliankara which was also called Cranganur, with Habban the merchant.

He worked great miracles and, in eight months, established, in that town, the Church of Jesus-Christ.

Then he went to Mailepuram, where he preached the Gospel of the Lord for four months and a half and embarked for China.

He remained in China four and a half months and returned to Mailepuram.

After he had been there for about a month, the son-in-law of the Rajah of Tiruvanchikulam ¹⁾ came to him and besought him to return to Malabar

They embarked on a ship and came by sea to Maliankara ²⁾ where, in less than six months, the Apostle converted the Rajah and his family, 40 Jews and 4000 heathens.

He was preaching to the people, built a Church surmounted by a Cross, and ordained priests

One of the first that he ordained was the son-in-law

1) The official title of the Rajah of Cranganur

2) Cranganur

of the Rajah who, at the baptism had taken the name of Peter, while the Rajah himself was called Andrew

Accompanied by Peter, the holy Apostle went to Quilon, where he planted a Cross and baptised 2400 heathens

From Quilon he went to Chayal, in the mountains, remained there a whole year, as he had done at Quilon, and baptised 2800 heathens, and also planted a Cross

At the request of the two chiefs of Triepalesuram he returned to that village But seeing that the people had desecrated the Cross, which he had previously erected there, he cursed the village (which at the present day is but a heap of ruins)

Nevertheless he remained there for two months He again erected the Cross, and instructed the people, and in order that they might not return again into heathenism, he ordained priest Thomas, one of the chiefs who had always remained strong in his faith And during these two months which he remained at Triepalesuram, he confirmed in their faith all the Christians and converted two hundred pagans.

Not far from there, to the South, he built the church

of Niranam, and ordained priests his first disciple Thomas Maliyakal, who was a native of that place, and another called Simon.

He then repaired to Kokamangalam where he dwelt one year and converted 1500 heathens, erected a Cross and taught the people how to honour God.

He visited again Kottakavu-Parur, remaining there nearly a year, and converted 2200 pagans.

Hence he went by the southern road to Mahankara, and was pleased to see the flourishing state of that Christian community. He stayed there only two weeks, and started for the North proceeding to Palayur where, in one month he baptised 1280 pagans and, according to his habit erected a great Cross, and, towards the end of the year 59 he returned to Mailepuram.

Thomas came back again to Malabar, and the Angels protected him during his long voyage which he made overland.

He remained two months at Maleatur and converted 220 pagans, then passing by Palayur and Cranganur he visited Parur, and went to Kokamangalam and afterwards to Quilon.

He tarried one year in each of these places. He

built churches and ordained priests and conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation to the faithful

He remained a whole year at Niranam, and was satisfied with the Faith of the people and with the exemplary life they led, and he gave Confirmation to all those who had not yet received that holy Sacrament

And taking with him his disciple Thomas Rabban Maliyakal he proceeded to Chayal in the region of the mountains, and during the year he stayed there he built a Church, and ordained priests, and he conferred on all, who had not yet received it, the holy Sacrament of Confirmation And after that he took leave of the Christians, and told them that they would not see him again

And he started for the country of the Tamils Thomas Rabban, and Peter, the son in law of the Rajah, whom the Apostle had ordained priest, accompanied him for seven miles and a half, and took leave of him

It would be impossible to relate all the miracles worked by our patron St Thomas, by making the sign of the Cross with the hand that had touched the wounds of the Lord

He raised to life 29 dead, liberated from the demon
 250 possessed, cured 230 lepers, gave sight to 250 blind
 persons, the use of their limbs to 120 paralytics and speech
 to 20 dumb. He restored moreover to health 280 sick
 people whom the physicians had abandoned.

He converted to the Faith of Christ 17490 Brahmins,
 3750 heathens of the Vaisya caste and 4280 Sudras.

He consecrated two Bishops,¹⁾ ordained seven²⁾ priests,
 four of whom were called Rabban,³⁾ and made 21 deacons.

This song is an abridged version of the detailed
 history written by Thomas Rabban, the second of the
 family of Maliyakal, and composed for the use of the
 people, by the humble priest Thomas, the forty-eighth of
 the same family, who deposes it, begging his blessing, at
 the feet of the holy Apostle St. Thomas, on the 2 of July
 1061

May God, in His mercy, make known and venerated
 the works of the Apostle by all the inhabitants of this
 country in which he preached the Gospel of Christ."

This rather monotonous song has a certain importance

1) Rajah Xanthippus and Peter

2) It seems to be an error of the copyst The primitive text probably reads seventeen

3) Doctor, teacher, Rabbi,

inasmuch as it gives the ancient tradition of the Christians of the Malabar Coast. And therefore we give it a place in this work.

Moreover it is an authentic extract from the Carmen Thomae Rabban which is known to us only from fragments and the so-called marriage songs, still in use among the Christians of St. Thomas in India.

As noted in another place, it is necessary to diminish somewhat the time which the legend assigns to the Apostolate of St. Thomas on the Malabar Coast.

The legend of Malabar does not mention the sojourn of the Apostle in Sindh. It makes him come directly from Jerusalem to Cranganur, and make one person of the Maharajah Peter Gundaphara and Rajah Andrew Kerala Perumal, adding thus the time the Apostle evangelised Sindh to the years he had worked in Malabar.

A careful critic of the legendary evidence does not allow us to extend over six years the time St. Thomas spent in Malabar.

It may be said approximately, that the Apostle passed seventeen years in India: about four years in Sindh, six at the most in Malabar, and seven at Mailepuram.

As for his journey to China, which certainly is not impossible, but for which we have no proofs, we leave for the present the question aside.

V

THE SEVEN CHURCHES

The legend tells us that in each village he converted to the Catholic Faith, St. Thomas erected a large Cross, around which the faithful used to assemble for prayers. Later on only did he build churches.

Tradition mentions seven Churches built by the Apostle in Malabar.

Cranganur or Malankara, which the Romans called Muziris, was at the time of the Apostle an important town, the chief emporium in the south west of India and the residence of the Rajah of Tiruvanchikulam.

The Rajah Andrew Kerala Perumal, whom the Apostle had baptised inaugurated a Catholic dynasty, which soon became extinct and was replaced by a line of heathen princes.

The kingdom of Andrew Kerala comprised the present kingdom of Cochin, and a portion of that of Travancore, from Quilon upwards.

Cranganur became thus the centre of Christianity, the Mother-Church of Malabar, and it was there that the Apostle established the first Bishop Xanthippus.

The town had once again a short interval of glory in the time of the Portuguese when the Pope erected there an Archiepiscopal See.

With the fall of the Portuguese began the decadence of Cranganur. The seat of the Archbishop was transferred to Angamali and at the present day on the site of this once famous town, there are but a few fishermen's huts.

In 1886, as a memory of the ancient traditions, His Holiness Pope Leo XIII allowed the Bishops of Damão to use the title of Archbishop of Cranganur.

Quilon, Kollam, Culan, is still an important town, the second capital of the Kingdom of Travancore.

Quilon is the most ancient of the present Episcopal Sees in India. It was erected by Pope John XXII in the year 1330, and re-established by Pius IX in 1853. It is one of the great Catholic centres in southern India.

The Church built by St. Thomas is said to have existed for upwards of a thousand years, when it was swept away by the sea, which, even at the present day, encroaches more and more upon the coast,

Chayal, situated to the east of Kanjurapally, was once an important village. The Church built there by St Thomas was in existence for a long time. But the inhabitants of the village were leaving it by and by and migrating to other places, and to day there remain only a few ruins.

Niranam is at present in the hands of heretics, Eutychians, or as they are called in India, Jacobites.

Kokamangalam, situated not far from Varkam and Pallipuram, in the kingdom of Travancore, has also lost its ancient importance.

The legend says, that the wooden Cross planted by the Apostle St Thomas was carried away by an inundation and cast up by the river on the island of Mattel near Pallipuram.

Some fishermen, seeing a great light surrounding the timber, informed the chief men of the village, who took the fragments of the broken Cross and placed it in their chapel.

Later on a church was built at Pallipuram, and the Cross is now kept over the altar of St Thomas, or rather a part of it, a piece of wood, about one foot long, with a fragment of the arm measuring ten inches.

The Rt. Rev Bishop Pareparambil, Vicar Apostolic of Ernakulam has lately built a church at Kokamangalam and a chapel on the island of Mattel, on the spot where, according to tradition, the Cross had stranded.

Parur-Kottakavu is still a centre of some importance, a parish belonging to the Vicariate Apostolic of Ernakulam.

Palayur, a parish of 2600 souls belongs to the Vicariate Apostolic of Trichur.

VI

MALEATUR

The sanctuary of Maleatur is situated on the summit of a mountain, on the spot where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to the Apostle St Thomas

Formerly the mountain was covered with a thick jungle, the haunt of wild elephants and tigers, and even now, although a road has been opened from the foot of the mountain to the sanctuary, at a certain season, it is infested with wild beasts

Maleatur is a famous place of pilgrimage frequented by the Christians of Malabar and of the neighbouring districts beyond the mountains. On the first Sunday after Easter especially, pilgrims flock thither in crowds

It is a custom among young married couples to make a pilgrimage to Maleatur, on the first Sunday after the Easter that follows their marriage

On the summit of the mountain there is now a nice church, the first stone of which has been blessed by the

Right Rev. Bishop Medlycott, and His Holiness Pope Pius X has granted indulgences to those who visit the sanctuary.

When the pilgrims ascend and descend the mountain, they invoke aloud St. Thomas, by calling him, according to their custom Muthappen or grand-father

„Muthappen of the golden Cross, ascent of the mountain, ascent of the mountain ! “ And when returning „Muthappen of the golden Cross, descent of the mountain, descent of the mountain ! “

That means St Thomas ! who erected the Cross with rays shining like gold, protect us who are climbing (or descending from) the mountain.

It is a reminiscence of the time, when the forest that covers the sides of the mountain was infested with wild beasts, and reaching the sanctuary a danger.

VII

CALAMINA

Mr Subramania Ayer, gives an ingenious explanation of the name of Calamina

— Much has been written, he says, on Calamina, but the true solution is this

According to the tradition current among the Christians of St Thomas, the scene of the martyrdom of the Apostle was the Sinna Malai ¹ or the little mount of Mailepur

The English give to Sinna Malai the name of little mountain, and the Portuguese call it monte pequeno

Again the ancient Chaldean colonists called it Galmona, from the Syro Chaldaic word Galma, rocky hill, and the diminutive suffix *ona*, which corresponds to the English *ock*

Galma-ona, Galmona, Calamina, means therefore hillock And that is the solution — ¹

It is really the solution? It still remains a question,

1) 1 Tamil, *sinna* means little and *malai* mountain. *Sinna-Malai* the little mountain

) Catholic Herald of India, 26 August 1908 p. 534

for the reasoning of the author shows more than one weak point.

In the first place How and whence it is known that the little mount near Mailepur was called Galmona ?

Secondly, why seek the solution in a foreign language, and find in the Chaldean the signification of a Tamil name? We would certainly not look in the Spanish or in the Turkish tongue for the etymology of the names of Cambridge or of Newcastle.

Thirdly, and this is the principal point, there has never existed any tradition, that the place of the martyrdom of the Apostle St. Thomas, was the Sinna-Malai or little mount of Mailepur.

On the contrary, tradition very ancient and constant, has always maintained that St. Thomas had won the palm of Martyrdom on the Peria-Malai, or great mount, and one would certainly not use a diminutive suffix to say great, the more so, as it is put in opposition to the little mount

And this knocks down the whole line of reasoning.¹⁾

1) Vide Part the first Chap V

VIII

THE CROSS OF MAILEPUR

Let us say a few words about the well known Cross of Mailepur, which is believed to be that before which the Apostle St Thomas knelt, when the soldiers of the Rajah of Calaminur pierced him with their lances¹

This Cross, carved on a slab of stone is placed above the altar in the Church of the great mount, on the very site of the martyrdom of the Apostle

This is what Father John Maffei S J wrote about it in 1537²

— About the same time (1528) an event occurred at Meliapor which deserves to be mentioned

The Portuguese were engaged in building a church on the hill on which, according to tradition, the Apostle Thomas had been put to death

As they were digging the foundations, they came

¹ See Legend III 36.

² Hist. Ind. I 12, p 214.

across a square slab of stone, which seemed to have been freshly sprinkled with blood.

On this stone was engraved a Cross in the centre of a frame. The arms of the Cross ended in lilies. Above it was a dove, and below something resembling a luxurious vegetation.

All around was an inscription resuming briefly the martyrdom of the Apostle, giving in particular the detail (which was besides testified too by the drops of blood) that the Apostle, kept embraced that Cross at the moment of his martyrdom.

The Portuguese raised this stone from the earth, and placed it on the altar of the Church.

A miracle that soon took place confirmed still more the Faith of the people.

Eight days before Christmas, and three days before the feast of St. Thomas, on the feast Expectationis Partus, while the people filled the Church, during holy Mass, at the moment when the priest was reading the Gospel, small drops of blood appeared on the stone they became larger, and the linen with which the priest touched the stone was stained with blood. It happened in sight of all the multitude.

The colour of the Cross also changed from white to

grey, then to black and finally to a brilliant blue. Towards the end of the Mass it returned to its ordinary hue.

The people burst into tears, and began to praise God.

And since then, almost every year, the same thing was repeated always during holy Mass, and at the Gospel.

And that there might not be any room to doubt the fact, the Bishop of Cochín (to whose diocese Meliapor then belonged) caused a relation to be drawn up, which he sent to Europe at the beginning of the Council of Trent.

IX

A POPULAR LEGEND

In conclusion, as a curiosity, so as to give to the reader an idea of the fate that overtakes legends, when in the course of centuries they happen to pass through the mouth of pious Indian Ladies, each of whom, in her great devotion to the Apostle adds to it a word of her own, we reproduce here the legend which we have given in Part III. 2, as it was gathered in 1349 by the Papal Legate to the Emperor of China, Bishop John Marignolli, and later in 1586 by Linschoten, and related to me in 1891 by a venerable old dame in Ceylon, and is still narrated to their awe-struck grand-children by grand-mothers in Malabar, on the Coromandel Coast and in Ceylon

When St Thomas the Apostle was in Ceylon, he climbed one day to the top of Adam's Peak, and saw there a tree of prodigious size, the like of which was certainly not to be found anywhere else in the world

And he said „This tree will serve me to build the church of Mailepuram,“

He called two coolies, and had it cut down. He tied his girdle to one of the branches and said to the coolies — „Take this tree to the sea shore “ —

And the two coolies, most easily, holding the end of the girdle, dragged the tree across mountains and valleys covered with thick jungle, and across flooded paddy fields and deposited it on the beach.

St. Thomas said to the tree — „Go now to Mulepuram and wait there till I come “ —

The tree plunged into the water, and slowly sailed away.

And it came to Mulepuram. And its size was so great, that it blocked up the entrance to the harbour. No ship could enter it, traffic was suspended, the merchants were complaining and the people grumbling.

The Rajah gave orders to clear it away. But all the coolies who were put to the work, and they were many, could not pull the huge timber out upon the beach, nor even to make it move from its place.

The Rajah called Brahmin and Hindu sorcerers, and said to them — „Go, and with your incantations, send away that accursed tree, that closes the entrance to the

harbour. Ships cannot enter, there is no more trade in the town, the people say that I am powerless, and what is worst of all, the customs no longer pour money into my treasury."

The Brahmins went to the sea-shore, and chanted mantras, and invoked their god Hanumant „ Oh ! Hanumant, white monkey, strong monkey, all-powerful god ! Thou who didst throw big rocks into the sea to build Adam's Bridge. Thou who with a torch attached to thy tail, didst burn the jungle in Ceylon in order to discover the refuge of Sita. Oh ! thou whom we adore, white monkey, cunning god ! Take this tree with thy four hands and throw it into hell, that it may burn and disappear."

Thrice they repeated this invocation, and each time they all chanted in chorus „ Ram, Ram, Ram, Hanumant ! " But the tree did not move.

Then came the sorcerers. They offered sacrifices They cut the head of a black cock and poured the blood on the timber, they were burning human hair, and shavings of finger-nails in the skull of a first-born child. They also shouted „ Ram, Ram ! " But the tree did not move.

The Rajah said to them „ You are a pack of

fools, and your magic is worth nothing, and I will do the thing without you ! " —

He mustered his army Three hundred elephants were harnessed to the tree, and pulled with all their might, while ten thousand soldiers, bathed in perspiration, pushed it But the tree did not move

While the Rajah was directing the works in person, cursing the elephants, and crying out to his soldiers that he would have them all flayed alive, and then thrown into the sea to be devoured by the sharks, they saw the Apostle St Thomas who was coming towards them

He was seated on an ass, clothed in a long white dress, with a slender cord for girdle He wore a stole richly embroidered with gold and a mantle of peacock feathers

Two big lions walked with him, one on the right, the other on the left side of the ass

St. Thomas said — „Rajah! give me this piece of timber, and allow me to use it for building a Church " —

The Brahmins began to laugh, and the Rajah, mocking the holy Apostle said — „Swami! Take this tree if

thou wilt, and if thou carriest it on thy back, I will give thee these elephants and all these soldiers as slaves."

And St. Thomas replied „I have naught to do with all these elephants, and I want no slaves. All I ask of thee, Rajah, is to allow me to build a Church."

The Rajah laughed and said „Well, remove the timber, and I will allow thee to build a Church, and endow it with so much land that it will take thee a whole day to go round it on thy ass."

St. Thomas took off his stole of gold-cloth and his mantle of peacock feathers, folded them neatly and gave them to one of the lions to keep, while the other lion was holding the ass by the bridle.

He went down into the water, and tying the end of his girdle to a branch of the tree, took the other end in his hand, and making on the timber the sign of the Cross drew it upon the beach.

The Rajah rose amazed, and said to the Brahmins „I told you, you are fools. This stranger alone knows more about magic, than all the pack of you!"

And the ass casting on the Brahmins a look of contempt, cried out - „Mathieengalé." 1)

1) Idiots, brainless fellows,

The Brahmins fled, and hid themselves in their houses for fear of the Rajah's anger and of the ass that spoke.

But many among the people who knew that Thomas was no magician but the Apostle of the Lord, believed in Jesus Christ and asked for baptism.

St Thomas built the Church. He caused the tree to be sawn and made of it the pillars and the roof, the doors, the windows and all the woodwork.

But when it came to pay the contractors, St Thomas found that he had no more money.

The Christians were perplexed, for they were poor and could not help the Apostle. But Thomas said — „Have confidence in God, He has given us the timber, and He will provide us with the required money. —

He had all the saw-dust collected in a big heap, made over it the sign of the Cross, and said to the Christians — „My children, take it and sow it all over the land which the Rajah has given to the Church. —

And the saw-dust germinated and shot out into beautiful trees, and, next morning, the whole land was covered with a great forest.

St Thomas had the trees felled, sold the timber and paid the contractors.

Thus has been distorted the beautiful Legend of St. Thomas in India. Interminable narratives have been interpolated with a marked predilection for black dogs and speaking donkeys.

A copyst of the middle-ages has added a foot-note, in which he says, that there is no need to wonder that the asses in India know how to speak, as they are all descended from the donkey of Balaam.

But it is not difficult to get out of all this additions the genuine, original text of the primitive Legend, and that is what we have endeavoured to do in the second part of this booklet, in the hope that the knowledge of the history of St. Thomas will increase the devotion of the Catholics of India towards the holy Apostle of Christ, their patron and their protector

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ERRATA

- PAGE. 74 line 1 — Instead of sepulchres — read
sculptures
- 94 note 3 — II — II 18
4 — III — III 5
5 — III — III 6 8 9
- 96 1 — III — III 35
2 — III — III 22
- 217 line 16 — It is — Is it

